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FEATURE DETECTIVE STORY

By the Left Hand

BY HAMILTON CRAIGIE

Our Next Feature Story Will Be "THE MELODY OF DEATH," In No. 94

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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BY THE LEFT HAND

By HAMILTON CRAIGIE

CHAPTER ONE

THE slim figure in the double-breasted overcoat alighted from the trolley at the corner of the street. The overcoat was a tan, spring affair, rather loud, of a somewhat conspicuous pattern, in its way as noticeably extreme as the slim, pointed shoes, the pearl beaver, the trousers creased to a knife-edge of perfection, the cravat of a vivid and arresting ultramarine, diagonaled with crimson.

Thrice, during the rather tedious journey from the station, the conductor had been halted in his rounds by the touch of insistent fingers at the end of a tan-clad arm and an importunate

"Eighth and Vine. Remember, let me off at Eighth and Vine!"

It was a day of bright sunlight and shadow, and as his passenger alighted the conductor gazed after the departing figure with a grin, idly speculative. He turned to the two passengers who rode with him on the platform.

"Must have a heavy date—eh, what?" he offered, with ponderous banter, to the younger of the two men, a tall, well-set-up individual, with a keen, observing eye.

The latter laughed. *"Cherchez la femme!"* he muttered, half aloud, as the car gathered headway. The conductor, his hand on the bell rope, favored him with a curious, half-resentful glance.

"What's that you say?" he asked, with the quick suspicion of the unlettered.

But the young man gave him an amiable grin.

"Why—ah—look out for the ladies. You do, don't you?" he countered easily. But his eyes were unsmiling. Truly the sartorial unusualness of that tan-coated passenger had made an instant impression. Well, perhaps that was the

purpose of it. But as Gregory Vinson, the detective, gazed after that figure with its swaying, lilting step, his eyes abruptly shadowed with a brooding stare.

There had been one thing, one salient feature in that resplendent ensemble; Vinson was certain that he alone had observed it.

But it was Vinson's profession to take notice: the dark, eager face, the coat, the cravat. Why, even the veriest tyro in observation would have remembered them. Passing him on his way out, the passenger for Eighth and Vine streets had brushed close to the young detective with the keen, observing eye. Vinson recalled the face, feature by feature: the small mustache, the eyes, burning with a sort of gray-green opalescence, in their depths a hot, avid spark.

A lady-killer? Vinson was certain that it was more than this. Everything had a meaning, if one but had the key; and two plus two had been known on occasion to produce a result that hinged upon the odd, the bizarre, the outre, the unusual. And the thing that he had seen had been a small thing, if you will, but an incongruity in that sartorial sum total, a thing as obviously improper as if, say, the sun had risen in the west—a thing, meaningless and yet charged with meaning, if——

Halfway down the street from the corner of Eighth and Vine there is a delicatessen shop. The proprietor, an obese, slow-moving Galician, glanced up with a heavy-lidded interest at the slim figure which loomed abruptly in the narrow door.

"I'm looking for Hemenway—Egbert Hemenway. Lives somewhere around here, doesn't he?"

The bass voice, harsh and ugly, seemed to carry a suggestion of menace, the more startling for the incongruity of the intruder's ultra-fashionable attire, the slim, almost effeminate figure, the knife-edge trousers, the polished boots.

The proprietor stared; then he nodded heavily:

"Yass—yass. He live at No. 20. You—you got business with Mr. Hemenway?"

The figure in the tan coat moved so that the light shone full upon the sinister, dark face, with its close-cropped mustache. The words came in a throaty guttural, with a hissing intensity:

"You're right, I've got business with Mister Hemenway; but it's my business and his—understand?"

Before the look in those eyes the Galician recoiled, muttering. Usually he was scant of courtesy, even to his regular custom. But there was that about the stranger that daunted him: the face—ach—it was the face of a damned soul, he thought to himself. Potztousand! He would not be able to forget it.

And as if he had uttered his thought aloud, his visitor spoke harshly, jeeringly:

"Take a good look, now, old mole; you'll know me next time, eh?"

There was a still brightness in those eyes, a depth; to the shopkeeper they appeared as bottomless pools of evil. He raised his hand in a surreptitious gesture, making the "figs," which is the symbol against evil, as the slim figure, with its swaying, gliding step, passed outward into the sunlight. The grocer was certain that he had seen the devil.

But the figure in the tan overcoat, young, exquisite, devil, or what-not, moved off across the sunlit way; the hat flamed; coat a dazzling glory; shoes glossy to perfection. But, back turned to the groceria, the dark face twisted to a hell of fate; the eyes filmed, with the predatory, chill stare of a peregrine, a falcon, mouth twisted in a savage sneer.

Across the street there was a comfortable café wherein, despite the advent of prohibition, certain liquid refreshment could be purchased for a price. Thither, hand thrust in the pocket of the overcoat, the traveler, with that swift, silent, jungle step, went forward across the asphalt, head bent, eyes narrowed. The swing doors fell inward with a slatting clatter. There was a brief clink of metal on metal, a thick oath.

"Well, here's how!" muttered a heavy voice.

The intruder grinned, without mirth. One brief, swift glance of lightning appraisal had told him that the man he sought was not here, at any rate. Leaning against the bar, in a studiously casual attitude, the words came, silken, purring:

"Seen Hemenway lately?"

For a moment there was a little silence. Again that thick laugh from the shadows at the rear. The bartender smiled faintly; the crow's-feet at the corners of his hard eyes deepened as he made answer:

"Hemenway—oh!"

He gave a little laugh, turning his head with the sound, his eyes, gray-green like a cat's in the dimness, surveying the stranger with a hint of insolence.

"Hemenway," he repeated. Then: "Well, I ain't exactly certain, young fella, but I think I see him at th' corner of Eighth and Vine. That was this morning. He had company—a real classy jane, if you ask me."

He ceased abruptly on the word, the grin wiped from his face as a boy wipes a chalk-mark from a slate. For the face that was turned to his matched it for insolence, and something more; before that mordant gaze he shrank, mumbling, even as had the shopkeeper.

The voice came, cutting, like a chill wind:

"I'm looking for Mister Hemenway, and I've business with him; it's his business and mine. Do you understand?"

The bartender blinked, his furtive eyes roving to right and left.

"No offense, sir, no offense!" he muttered. But the words were spoken to the visitor's back.

"A hot sport, Jerry, an' you can lay to that!" came a mocking voice. "And he had your number, or I'm a Dutchman—a hot sport."

"The devil you say!" muttered the bartender, with an assumption of bravado. Those eyes—ugh!—they were like the eyes of a lost soul. He would not be able to forget them.

But once in the street the wayfarer stood not upon the order of his going. Just ahead of him the looming figure of a policeman, majestic guardian of the law, passed, swinging his club. The figure in the tan coat halted him with up-raised arm.

"Can you direct me to No. 20 Vine street, officer?" he asked. The voice was low, even, controlled.

The policeman eyed his questioner with a certain disfavor.

"Just 'round th' corner," he answered shortly, his gaze encompassing the pearl hat, the lustrous shoes, the scintillant cravat, the shining overcoat, the thin, dark face, with its dandified mustache.

It was an ensemble that found him instantly antagonistic. Besides, the fellow might be spoofing him; you never could tell. Number Twenty! Why, it was not more than six doors from the corner.

He turned upon the young exquisite with a scowl. But at what he saw the words died in his throat. That face—it would be with him for the remainder of his rounds. Of a sudden he had been conscious of it as a white, glimmering oval; eyes, twin pools of burning chrysoprase; mouth a-grin in a soundless snarl of sheer, feline malevolence. It was like a face seen in dreams, a waking nightmare; it would be with him for the remainder of the day—and after.

Questioned afterward, neither the shopkeeper, the bartender, nor the policeman varied by a hair's-breadth as to the sum total of impression.

"A devil!" they were agreed. For it had been as if a soul, instinct with evil, had risen from its lair, deep down, to peer for a moment at the light of day. So murder shows sometimes its naked face; so, sometimes, vengeance.

The slim figure in the tan overcoat, its hand in its pocket, went onward along the sunwashed street, with its smooth, easy, effortless stride; then, abruptly, it halted, with a sharp, sudden intake of the breath. The policeman had disappeared.

Out of the entrance of No. 20, which was a six-story apartment house fronting a small park, a girl had stepped into the sunlight. Bright, like a flame she was, slim and slender, swaying, swaying, like a lily upon its stem, her mouth, poppy-red, parted just now in a fond, foolish smile, as of remembrance, her eyes humid as if at the indwelling of some secret thought.

Down the street there sounded the rapid, staccato clamor of a motor; it rose, died; there came the grinding of brakes as it slid slowly to a protesting halt. The throb of its engine, like the beating of a heart, rose in the windless air in a muted thunder as the figure in the yellow overcoat froze, rigid. The face, under the pearl-gray Stetson, melted, reformed, dissolved as if in an abrupt fury of conflicting motive, then crystallized to sudden harshness; the eyes, bleak, cold, surveyed the advancing figure of the girl in a still, silent passion, controlled and terrible.

The taxi-driver lifted his hand in an almost imperceptible signal; then he relaxed in his seat as the figure in the tan overcoat gave him his answer: a hand, palm outward, fingers spread. The girl had not yet seen him.

It was a day of bright sunlight and shadow. For the merest flicker of a thought the slim, tan-coated figure appeared to hesitate; the hand jerked half-way from the pocket, disclosing a something which glinted dully in the sun; then, as a shadow moves, soundless and swift, he was into the black maw of an alley at his right. Across the sidewalk, from the alley's mouth, there was projected a black band of shadow, perhaps six feet from right to left, and reaching into the street.

The girl had seen nothing. Now she came on, humming a little tune, so that the heart of the watcher in the alley contracted to a fierce spasm of emotion, a violent intensity of passionate regard filming the eyes there in the darkness with the predatory, brooding stare of a vulture, of a jungle-beast.

The girl, entering that black band of shadow, became almost instantly invisible; gone was her grace, her beauty, the careless, fine flame of her free, irresistible youth—into the shadow.

It was high noon, and the street, empty of all life save for the taxi and its driver, dreamed under the sun. Away, in the dim distance, a church bell chimed, one drowsy note; there followed a fanfare as of silver trumpets; the sustained and bellowing crescendo of a thousand whistles, tocsin of the noon. The sound of a shot, say of a cry, would be lost, submerged in that vast, smothering, multitudinous thunder, as if it had never been.

And then, out of that black belt of gloom, serene, unruffled, came the girl, heels tap-tapping on the pavement, on her lips the lingering essence of that fleeting smile. She turned the corner, and the watcher, face a mask, emerged, turned, and with a nod to the taxi-driver disappeared in the entrance of Number Twenty. Behind him, as he went up the narrow stair, was borne the muffled droning of the engine; a brief, wintry smile edged the thin lips; the eyes in the darkness glowed with a still, slumbrous fire.

The house was what is known as a "walk-up"; at the second landing a blank wall turned sharply at an angle; to one unfamiliar with the place that wall would have operated as an unforeseen and unexpected barrier.

The silent figure on the stair turned it without hesitancy; perhaps he had the faculty of seeing in the dark.

The Hemenway apartment was on the third floor. A pin-point of gas, burning dimly at the stair-head, laid emphasis upon the thick-plied

shadows. To read the legend on the door one would have had to turn up the gas; the intruder, bending swiftly, took something from an inner pocket; there was a faint click of metal on metal; the door swung wide.

CHAPTER TWO

A MAN sat in a huge, wing chair, a magazine unopened in his lap. It was a magazine of the sort featuring the sleazy adventures of impossible Lotharios; presently the man in the comfortable chair would have a look in it, but not for the vicarious enjoyment it afforded; perhaps he could, had he been so minded, have written a story or two himself that would have set them all by the ears.

The man was handsome in a bold, sensual, aggressive fashion—the sort of good looks that a woman of a certain type finds attractive—a woman, say, careless and irresponsible, young, such a one, peradventure, as had just now issued from the portal of Number Twenty.

A faint smile of recollection, broadening to a grimace, broke on his too-full lips. He yawned, his arms wide, his gaze falling upon a tall glass and a siphon on a tabouret under his hand. But Egbert Hemenway's groping fingers never touched that glass.

There came a sharp command at his back:

"Keep 'em up—right—that's it—now."

At the sound of that voice, dry, prosaic, yet with an undercurrent of still and dreadful passion, Hemenway stiffened; all at once, as at the touch of a sudden, blighting malady, his face changed, disintegrated, line by line and wrinkle by wrinkle, until it was the face of an old man, an elderly satyr, an unlovely and repulsive mask.

There came a swift, stealthy footfall, and the figure in the tan overcoat and the pearl-gray Stetson confronted him, eyes blazing in a face dead-white. But it was not at sight of the blue-steel automatic in the thin, claw-like hand that Hemenway shrank.

"You!" he gasped, in a sort of whistling croak.

For a moment there was a thick silence. They were alone in the flat. Hemenway's wife was absent on a visit to relatives; she would not return for another fortnight, at the least; doubtless the intruder had known of this.

Now his visitor leaned forward, the pistol thrust, at the end of an arm, rigid, unyielding, into Hemenway's face. The words hissed out like snakes:

"Yes—I—I warned you—you toad—you mildewed cur; you've had your chance. This girl Elsa——"

The voice abruptly halted on the name, the eyes flamed, the gun, moving in a half-circle, steadied. The man in the chair leaned forward, as if straining against invisible bonds. He spoke in a thin whisper:

"Carey—you wouldn't kill me. My God, I can't believe it. I promise you Elsa'll be the last; there won't be any others."

The dark face came closer; the words dripped venom, like a distillation, the slow, bitter acid of a corrosive vengeance:

"She—will be—the last; there will be—no others. I just met Elsa and I let her go, but as for you—love pirate——"

The mouth twitched, laughing in a horrible travesty of mirth, the eyes agate-hard, the nostrils pinched abruptly as with a sudden, cardiac lesion. Hemenway's voice rose in a whining entreaty:

"My arms—they're tired, Carey—can't I—put 'em down?" he whimpered.

Carey grinned, a mere facial contraction of the lips.

"In hell, doubt it not, my Egbert," he mocked. "There will you find rest."

The eyes narrowed, the voice rose, died, gathered strength, in a blasphemous burlesque:

"Go forth, human soul!" it intoned. Then: "Bright college years; do you remember, Egbert?"

The voice flared suddenly to a hissing intenstiy:

"Down, down to hell, and say I sent you!"

The pistol crashed, then crashed again. Under the blasting shock of the heavy slugs the man in the chair crumpled, collapsing inward like an empty bag.

Laughing like a boy, the murderer in two swift strides had gained the doorway and the hall without.

A moment the slim figure crouched, listening; as from above there came the slamming of a door, cries, ejaculations, the hurried rustle of feet. Within the flat there sounded abruptly a wailing cry, long-drawn, insistent.

It was the telephone "howler." The dead man, falling, had upset the instrument.

The murderer grinned coldly in the semi-gloom, then, running lightly down the stair, had gained the street. It showed empty, save for the distant figure of a policeman, striding at ease, coat open, club swinging from extended finger.

The taxi, engine still running, stood at the curb. The figure in the yellow overcoat got in leisurely, the door slammed, the gears meshed, the motor roared with a sudden, sharp, staccato clamor; the car shot forward into high even as the policeman broke into a lumbering run. It turned the corner on two wheels, righted, roared onward and away.

CHAPTER THREE

THE murder of Egbert Hemenway threatened to become a *cause celebre*. In the first place, the figure in the tan overcoat was never seen again; it had been obviously a disguise; that, without doubt, had been the controlling motive

for the various encounters with the shopkeeper, the knight of the apron, the policeman.

The chauffeur, when questioned, was able to prove that he had not been in cahoots with the murderer; he was merely an employee of a well-known company; he had been sent out in response to a telephoned request; he had been ordered to proceed to Number Twenty Vine Street; he was to recognize his fare by the pearl-gray Stetson and the yellow overcoat; he had set him down perhaps a mile distant, at a busy four corners; that was the sum.

As there was no particular reason to question his statement, he was released on his own recognizance; it was understood that the unusual was frequently the usual in the business of a taxi-driver. As a matter of fact, he had been telling the truth as he saw it.

It was an *impassé*—a cul-de-sac—a blind alley.

Hemenway's wife had returned, to find herself a widow out of due time, her first intimation of the tragedy the shocking disclosure of a newspaper headline. To the reporters, when she had gotten over the first effects of her bereavement, she had nothing new to offer; she had been staying with relatives, and had, as it chanced, returned to the city on the very day of the murder, stopping at the Windermere Hotel.

Plainly, she knew nothing of the scandal which had centered about the dead man; she would discover that soon enough from the newspapers. Meanwhile——

CHAPTER FOUR

GREGORY VINSON, sergeant of detectives, had returned from his vacation. He had been reading of the Hemenway case, and it had interested him.

Now, if there was one quality Vinson possessed, it was imagination; if another, a memory like a steel trap for details: little things, insignificant in themselves, plus a faculty for putting two and two together to make five, for instance.

He had been discussing the matter with his chief, old "Sure-Fire" Haggerty, who, to use his own pithy phrase, was "sick and tired" of the whole condemned business. He had so stated, in no uncertain terms, when Vinson's voice came, in low-voiced comment:

"*Cherchez la Femme.*"

"What's that you say?" inquired his superior, hand cupping his ear, grizzled chin outthrust.

"Why, find the woman, Chief. Depend upon it, there's a woman at the bottom of it; there always is, isn't there? That's been my experience."

The chief, a confirmed bachelor of twenty years' standing, with a paint-brush mustache and a frosty blue eye, snorted:

"Well, Greg, I can see you won't be happy till you've burned your fingers. So, hop to it, son, if that's what's eatin' you."

His subordinate grinned. "You're on, Inspector!" he challenged. "And you watch my dust."

He rose.

"And, Chief, I can tell you one thing, if you're looking for information: that fellow in the tan overcoat——"

He paused, his lips closing with a snap.

"He—never committed that murder; we'll start from that."

Haggerty grunted; then he tapped his forehead with a blunt forefinger, eyes turned to the ceiling.

"Crazy as a coot!" he murmured, with a slow head-shake. Then: "Here; come back here!" he shouted to the closing door; then relaxed in his chair with a smile and a windy sigh.

"Joshin' me—huh?" he muttered, turning to the papers on his desk. Presently—he had had a hard day—his head fell forward, his eyes closed; the chief of detectives for the thriving commonwealth of Arkadelphia slept the sleep of the justly weary.

From which it may be inferred that even the smartest of policemen may nod upon occasion, in season and out. And Haggerty, it is presumed, was no exception to the rule.

CHAPTER FIVE

ACTING on the assumption that where there is smoke there must be fire, Vinson cast about him for a motive, and he found it in the elemental one of jealousy. Hemenway had been a bit of a gay dog, it appeared; everybody knew it but his wife, which jibed with the usual in such matters. The man who had killed Hemenway could have had no other reason; nothing had been stolen; in the desk at the time was a rather large sum; Hemenway usually carried on his person an amount large enough to tempt the cupidity of any ordinary thief.

"Find the woman," Vinson had postulated. And an interview with the bartender brought him his first lead.

"Surest thing you know," the latter had told him. "There was a jane, there were several of them, and there was a particular one, of course; he brought her in here two, three times, and th' last time—lemme see, why, it was on the very night before he was croaked. Lemme see, now——"

"Well, what was her name?" queried Vinson, a pulse in his temple beating in sudden excitement.

The bartender deliberated. "Well, lemme see," he continued, with aggravating slowness. "That last time they were having an argument, I think; they had words; I could hear 'em; he called her——"

"Yes!" cut in Vinson sharply. "He called her——?"

The bartender scowled with the effort at remembrance.

"Nell—no, that wasn't it. Yes—I remember now—it was Elsa. Wait a minute—Elsa Reynard! She was a telephone operator—sure—the Windermere Hotel. Hey, wait a minute!"

But Vinson had vanished.

At the Windermere Vinson received his first check. Yes, there had been an Elsa Reynard with the hotel; she had been a switchboard operator, but she was no longer working there; she had been absent since—his informant named a date; it was—the detective drew in his breath—the day following the killing at Number Twenty.

Furnished with an address—it was that of a mean house in a mean street—Vinson journeyed thither, sensible of a curious depression. Truth to tell, he expected nothing of that address.

There was an odor of decay and death about the tenement; it arose like an aura, an exhalation, in the dripping walls, the rotting floors, the perilous stairway, leading like a ladder into a sweating, dank atmosphere of murmurous gloom.

His hand in the pocket of his coat, Vinson, with the aid of his pocket flash, made out to see the number, rapped, and a thin voice, strained and harsh, bade him enter.

And then, under the flat flame of the single gas jet, he saw her; he was abruptly conscious of a sudden, sharp disappointment at the harsh, unlovely voice:

"Well, what do you want?" it asked, in a quavering crescendo.

The girl's blonde beauty was like a soiled and tarnished vessel, a bowl from which the essence, the fragrance, had long since departed.

"Mistake, I guess," said Vinson slowly, backing to the door; then, at a sudden movement in the shadows, had made a darting clutch, his arm reached out, his hand, holding his gun, swung in a short arc; there was a brief, quick explosion of movement, and the figure in the tan overcoat stood shivering and blinking at the light.

"Now, let's have a look at you!" grated Vinson, his face on a level with the thin, dark features, the burning eyes, the pinched nostrils above the infinitesimal mustache.

The creature whimpered, hands twitching; a tic at the corner of its mouth throbbing; ashen lips fumbling together without sound. The detective bent for a long look at the face, twirled the man by the shoulders; then he gave a disgusted grunt. All this while the girl Elsa had sat, immobile, face of stone, gazing at Vinson in a sort of sightless stare.

The detective released his hold, stepping backward to the door. "Sorry," he said simply. There was a certain compunction in his tone. The man—well, he was not what Vinson had thought him; the tan overcoat was a single-breasted affair, of a vintage green with age.

"Cokies!" the detective was muttering as he went down the shaky stair. He had drawn blank,—but had he? While he marked time a visit to Hemenway's widow might not be amiss; perhaps she could furnish him with a lead; who could tell?

He found Mrs. Hemenway in somber black. She received him with a stony calm, nor could she add to the sum total of his information. But Vinson, leaving that tragic house, smiled to himself, a grim, tight-lipped smile.

For he had not forgotten. The thing that he was looking for; perhaps he would never find it, but he had not forgotten. Again he was doing a sum in mental arithmetic, putting two and two together, and finding it?

His way taking him through the shopping district, on a sudden impulse, perhaps, he turned in at the ornate portal of a super-exclusive shop, specializing in certain indispensable articles of feminine apparel, the name on its product an assurance of quality.

A frigid clerk thawed perceptibly at the disclosure of Vinson's identity.

"One moment, sir," he promised, to return presently with a dignified individual in ministerial sable, who, to the detective's question, exclaimed in a pious horror:

"But, sir, it's not possible! Surely, you cannot mean——?"

"That's beside the question," answered Vinson, his eyes suddenly hard, his voice incisive. "The date of the purchase of that mourning cloth is all that I require."

The clerk vouchsafed the information. Vinson, his eyes ablaze, scandalized that sacrosanct interior with a handclap like a pistol-shot and an abrupt, explosive

"I've got it!"

Then he was into and through the doorway at a plunging rush.

CHAPTER SIX

VINSON, the two plainclothesmen at his back, mounted the long stair whose carpeted treads gave forth no sound to that swift, silent ascent. At a door opposite a landing he paused, hand outthrust behind him, palm outward, in a gesture of sudden caution. He bent, listening at the keyhole to the low murmur of voices, followed by a sudden hush.

His hand, on the bell-push, exerted a long, steady pressure; there came an answering clamor, shattering the sudden silence; the voices arose; footsteps, slow, measured, approached the door. It swung slowly open, disclosing a slim figure, with a thin, dark eager face, eyes burning, haunted as to their depths with a still, flickering flame.

Vinson spoke, without preamble:

"Mrs. Carey Hemenway, I arrest you for the murder of your husband——"

He got no further. The woman, one thin hand raised to her lips, broke into sudden frantic laughter, spending itself as suddenly in a dry, racking cough.

"Yes! yes!" she cried then. "I did it, of course I did it. He neglected me for other women. I—killed him—even as—even as—he——"

The voice trailed off. A man, a physician by his clipped beard and professional manner, appeared to them out of the shadows.

"Even as he has murdered her, gentlemen," he told them, in a whispering aside. He bowed to Vinson, who had recognized him as Hedges, chief surgeon at the State Hospital.

"The brain has gone, as you see, Sergeant," he said. "It is only a matter of time—a few weeks at the most—and she will be beyond the law."

Vinson regarded his chief with eyes in which a trace of tragedy lingered; then he squared his shoulders as a man freeing himself from a burden.

"Well, Inspector, I'm not so cocky about it as I might be," he prefaced. "However, here are the facts, and I'll make them just as brief as possible:

"In the first place, you'll remember that I said that he could not have committed the murder. That was because——"

His face broke in a grim smile of recollection.

"Well, to begin at the beginning, or thereabouts, I was looking for a woman—the woman; I was convinced, as I say, that it had never been a man. With this end in mind, I interviewed the bartender. I'll admit that at first I suspected the girl Elsa. I had given up any idea that it had been some jealous suitor of the girl's who had murdered Hemenway out of revenge."

He paused again, his keen, eager face sober, serious.

"And Hemenway—well, the least said the better. Now, I was willing to gamble on it that it was a woman; if not Elsa, then another. And I gathered a clue, or rather two; first, the fact that the Windermere Hotel, and that was the place of Hemenway's first meeting with Elsa, is at the corner of the street at which the taxi-driver discharged his passenger; second, on my second visit to Number Twenty there was something that I observed—just a bit of mourning goods and a box, and the date of delivery was just one month prior to the killing!"

Vinson leaned forward in his chair. Haggerty cleared his throat. "Well, and what then?" he inquired heavily.

"Why, just this," continued the detective. "Why should a purchase of mourning goods be made a month prior to the death of the one for whom they were intended, if not with a foreknowledge of that fact? I verified this, of course. That was once where she slipped up; but she was cunning, keen, with the strategy of the insane, as we know now, and there was just one other thing. I'm coming to that presently."

He gazed off into the distance, then resumed: "Well, that was just the sort of thing a mentally unbalanced plotter would be apt to do. However, Mrs. Hemenway was clever; she had it all planned in advance, down to the very smallest detail; she had been a very clever actress, with a remarkable talent for make-up; she went to the country right enough, journeyed to the city on the day of the murder, put on her male make-up at the Windermere, returning there immediately after the killing; by the way, they found her costume, or rather Doctor Hedges did, in a closet in the flat! And that's another proof, as it appears, of her mental condition; she walked right into the flat with the stuff in a suit-case!"

Haggerty shook his head.

"That's clever, Greg," he commented. "Still, I don't see just how——"

Vinson grinned for the first time. "Well, a little matter of luck, plus observation and deduction," he began. "It hit me—right between the eyes, so to speak. It was a small thing, perhaps an unimportant thing, but if she had not overlooked it I doubt very much if either of us would have ever known anything of Mrs. Carey Hemenway."

He paused again, with a modest disclaimer.

"As I say, it was a bit of luck, if you like; it's flavored with a pretty big 'if,' but if I hadn't been riding on the platform of that trolley car, I'd never have seen that—incongruity we'll call it, a small thing, but a big one, as it happened, an indication, a giveaway, a betrayal that she was——"

"A woman!" exclaimed Haggerty. "Now, what do you know about that?"

"Exactly," continued Vinson. "It was not an absolute certainty, of course, but it pointed the way to a presumption that would have been correct ninety-nine times out of a hundred. You know how a woman's clothes are made, or don't you? Or should I say tailored? Her man's overcoat; that was the clue; when she buttoned it she forgot the one thing she should have remembered; it was double-breasted, you'll recall; she buttoned it, as no man could possibly have buttoned it——"

"On the left-hand side!" finished Haggerty. "Of course!"

The Astral Hand

By JAMES P. COGAN

WHAT might have been considered a singular automobile accident and dismissed by the uncharitable, reading of it in the morning's news, as the result of a midnight "joy ride" and too much wine, became a baffling mystery for the police authorities through the finding of a last message written on the back of a torn envelope.

The morning newspapers carried a brief paragraph telling of the finding of a wrecked automobile at the foot of the Palisades, under the Englewood Cliffs, on the Jersey side of the Hudson. Pinned under the wrecked car was found the body of a young woman, and near by that of a well-dressed, middle-aged man.

The police said the automobile must have gone over the top some time in the early morning, as it was not there when the last patrol passed the spot at midnight. The woman must have been killed instantly; the man's fall had evidently been broken by a tree, as the branches testified, and he had tried to crawl to the aid of his companion.

He had failed to reach her, as he was so badly injured, but had summoned sufficient strength in his dire agony to scrawl a last message on the back of an envelope pulled from his pocket, with other papers, found near his body.

Despite his terrible suffering and the semi-darkness of the night he had managed to pencil the following:

"Cora—not accident—murdered—by C——"

He had been unable to finish the name he was trying to write. It was uncertain whether the capital letter was intended for C, O or A. The pencil had fallen from his hand ere he could finish the stroke and lay beside the envelope.

From papers and cards found on the bodies it was learned that the man was Ralph Rushmore, a cloak and suit maker, of New York City, and the fashionably dressed young woman a department store buyer from the West.

It was at first thought that Rushmore had missed the road somehow the night before and gone crashing over the cliff, which here is some two hundred feet in height. But the scrawled message would indicate that it was the work of an enemy.

Evidently Rushmore knew the party whose name he tried to write on the envelope. Was it a man or a woman? He evidently knew he was being followed by some enemy in another automobile, and was no doubt trying to elude or outdistance his pursuer. He would naturally have been nervous and excited, and so easily have made a wrong turn at the top of the cliff and gone to his death.

An examination of the wrecked automobile, however, disclosed the fact that he must have been overtaken and run into by the pursuing car; the rear left mud guard and signal lamp were badly crushed and bent as if from the impact of a heavy auto. This was not the result of the car falling; it had evidently dived head first and landed on the tonneau, proving that the mud guard and lamp had been broken before the machine had gone over the top.

At the top of the cliff where the tragedy had occurred the police found the tracks of two automobiles, the pursuing car evidently being a more powerful one than Rushmore's, as indicated by the width of the tires in the soft earth.

The conclusion of those making the investigation was that Rushmore had swerved out of the main road here, thinking that the pursuing car would pass on without seeing him. The ground at this part was quite level and clear of trees and shrubbery. Rushmore must have seen how near he was to the edge of the cliff in time to stop his car. But he did not realize that it remained vaguely silhouetted against the starlit eastern sky. His pursuer must have seen the maneuver, realized his opportunity for vengeance, followed, crashing into Rushmore's car, sending it over the cliff and, applying his emergency brakes in time, saved himself from following. The wide tire tracks stopped twenty feet from the edge of the cliff.

Like many other murder mysteries, this might have been quickly forgotten and never have been solved but for the courage and determination of the dead man's daughter, Cora. Cora Rushmore possessed a spirit as invincible, a character as strong, and will as adamant as her father who, in the clutches of death, despite terrible agony and a crushed and broken body, should strive to reach his companion and, failing, still force himself to pencil a last message.

Cora, a beautiful girl of eighteen, was the only child of Ralph Rushmore, who had been a widower since Cora was a child of seven. He had never remarried, and as the years went by he and Cora became inseparable and the best of "chums."

Corn idolized her "dad," and he in turn gratified her every wish. Their home on Riverside Drive was looked after by a faithful old housekeeper, who had been with the family since Cora was born; had nursed Cora in the early years and, since her mother's death, had virtually been a "mother" to her.

Cora felt her father's death keenly, but showing

little signs of outward grief, bearing her sorrow with Spartan fortitude. The details of the funeral and the annoyances of the unlooked-for publicity fell upon her. Very quietly, but firmly and decidedly, she attended to everything, met police and reporters, arranged with her father's business manager to keep things going, and never gave a sign that she suffered.

Without waiting for the slow process of the law, Cora engaged a private detective, after cautious inquiries and rejecting a number. The man she finally enlisted in her cause was Edward King—to his intimates known as "Ned." When she entered his office, before she heard his voice, she knew he was the man she wanted—further convinced when he spoke.

Courteous, sympathetic, strong in physique and character, Ned King had a clear sure blue eye and a low, vibrant tone to his voice that carried the conviction of power. Cora was drawn to him at once; she felt that she had found a friend.

"Please do not think that I am vengeful, Mr. King," Cora said, when he had seated her in a comfortable large leather chair; "it is not that. It was the cowardly way my dear father was killed, without a chance to fight.

"It's a challenge, not only to me, but to us all. Such a cold-blooded murder should not go unpunished. I believe there are men who can match wits and brains with any who think they can safely defy the law. That's why I am here; somehow I feel that you are equal to any task where justice is concerned."

"My dear young lady," King replied, "I know of your sorrow, and you have my sincere sympathy. I will gladly do all in my power to bring the guilty person to justice. I am at liberty to take up the task if you want me to."

"I had hoped you could, Mr. King," Cora said in a broken voice, "for I feel my father's loss deeply. This tragedy has severed a relationship that seldom exists between a father and daughter. Oh, I loved him so! Dad! Dad!" Cora nearly broke down, and King's sympathetic action in patting her hand almost brought a flood of tears. But she bravely fought them back and brushed the starting drops from her eyes, looked up and courageously forced a smile.

"So young, so lovely and so lonely, to be fighting such fearful odds," thought King; "I am going to help her; she needs a friend, and action will keep her from brooding."

Cora told King all that she knew of her father's business affairs, but candidly admitted that she did not know much, because, while her father was all that a loving father should be, in her eyes, he never discussed business at home.

"Father sometimes went away on business trips for a month or more," Cora told King. "But I always had a letter from him every day. Outside of his auto he had no hobbies or pleasures. He made no pretense at being religious, but was strictly just and honorable in every way.

"He wanted me to accompany him on that trip to Jersey with Miss Rugby, but as I had an engagement with a theatre party, they excused me. Perhaps had I gone I might still have him with me. How he could have an enemy I can't conceive. He was not interested in politics. His business and home were all he thought of."

Cora afforded King every facility for learning whatever he could relative to her father's business and private life. Together they went over his letters and papers at the office and in his "den" at home. Everything was found in perfect order, but never a clue to an enemy.

Together they visited the scene of the tragedy. Time and weather had obliterated almost all traces save the broken tree and the automobile tracks at the top of the cliff. The wrecked car had been removed to police headquarters, to be kept for evidence.

King made a trip to the home town of Miss Rugby, the companion of Rushmore on the fatal trip, but nothing was elicited there, save that she was well and favorably known, it being her birthplace. Her reputation at the department store was that of a keen, clever business woman. She lived with her widowed mother, whom she supported in comfort, and was considered an ideal daughter by the neighbors. She was a "home body," and, as far as known, had no love affairs.

Returning to New York, King reported to Cora, and told her that he might be away for some time, as he wanted to seclude himself and study out and try and untangle the problem before him; that if he discovered anything important he would communicate with her.

Cora realized that King would have to go, but she had become so used to looking forward for his kindly presence and ready sympathy that, as she frankly told him, she would miss him very much.

Ned King never accepted a task that he was unequal to; the principle he worked upon was that every criminal left a trail; the more difficult the trail the greater the incentive for King to uncover and follow it.

Formerly a successful mining engineer, King was in possession of a handsome income from mining investments. A college graduate, he was considered an expert on all that pertained to mining, and his pen alone enabled him to maintain himself in luxury.

Ned King in repose appeared older than he really was; he was still on the sunny side of forty. Quiet, soft-spoken, reserved, a hint of frost in his hair; partial to dark gray in his attire, with a touch of color only in his tie; a bit of individuality in cameo pin and ring, he seemed more the type of a prosperous business man than a detective.

Whatever the explanation psychologists might advance, the fact remained that Cora had awakened something within him that was not pertinent to the unraveling of mysteries. However, if

he gave it a thought, he dismissed it with the feeling that here was a "mystery" beyond him and of which Fate could only determine the outcome.

This glowing feeling, a strong and growing admiration for the plucky girl, was a further incentive to action—but it did not affect his practical methods; if anything, it put a keener edge on his determination to help her. He would like to see her under normal conditions, when she could be happy and smiling.

King visited again the scene of the tragedy, going carefully over the ground both at the top and the bottom of the cliff. He hoped that something, however insignificant, might reward his search and afford him a clue to the mystery. A bolt, a nut, or even a piece of broken glass, that had been a part of the enemy automobile, would have given him something tangible to work on. He combed the ground where the pursuing car had halted, but found nothing.

He went to police headquarters and made a thorough examination of the wrecked car, looking into every pocket, locker, and even in the tool kit, for something that would help him, but his efforts were unrewarded.

His failure to unearth the slightest clue that would give him a point of departure began to get on his nerves. Ordinarily, in the pursuit of his calling, his problems were simply cold mathematical business propositions; whatever interest might attach to a case came from the pleasure of conflict; it was a "game" in which he held a hand, and he found zest in trying to win.

With Cora it was different. Here was a lovely, lonely girl that had been cruelly wronged in being deprived of a loving father, and King felt that he was her knight errant; that she found a relief from sorrow in thinking that he was sympathetic and interested and would aid her in obtaining justice.

King's favorite recreation and surest "specifics" for toning up when brain-fagged were reading, walking alone in the country and "taking in" a vaudeville show. His inclination at the present time was toward the show. Running down the column of the evening paper to see what was in town, he was delighted to find that "Professor St. Elmo," an old friend of his, was to be that night at the Palace, and he determined to go and see his act. The idea acted with tonic effect, and he knew he was on the right tack.

"Professor St. Elmo" had a mind-reading act, with which he toured the vaudeville circuits. His real name was Thomas Wesley; "St. Elmo" was for stage purposes, and because it looked better on programs and posters. In private life he had quite a reputation as an experimental chemist and electrical expert. He had a number of remarkable inventions to his credit, among them a trumpet which actually recorded voices from the air without trickery of any kind, and which had been recorded on a phonograph record.

He worked with his daughter Miriam, a child of seven years, whose peculiar power was revealed one night when he was at home writing letters. Miriam was in the room with him, playing with her dolls on a chair at some distance from where he was writing. Her back was to him, so she could not see what he was writing; she was talking to her dolls and repeating for their benefit the contents of the letters.

He was naturally surprised, and asked her how she knew what he was writing. She could not tell him, save that "it came into her head." She was a bit scared lest she had done something wrong, but he soon dispelled that thought by taking her in his arms and hugging her. That made it "all right." He realized that she was in telepathic communication with himself.

Calling his wife, he tried various experiments with the child, and found that she could not only tell him what he was thinking about, but could read passages in any book that he looked at. Later he found that she could foretell events about to happen; visitors that came who were unexpected; where things that had been mislaid could be found.

Developing this peculiar faculty in the little one, after some private seances among friends, he decided to try the effect on a vaudeville audience. He had no trouble in gaining a trial and an engagement.

He reaped more money from his vaudeville act than he could otherwise; and as he needed considerable money for his scientific experiments, he had continued in vaudeville.

The show was a huge success. King felt like a "new man" after it; it had given him a new angle of thought and had suggested many things to him. After the show he looked up the "professor," and accepted an invitation to dine with him the next day.

The result of that meeting was remarkable. He had something to impart to Cora. That evening he visited her, and his heart warmed to the girl, for she was downcast and quiet, but brightened perceptibly when she saw him. Approaching his subject cautiously, for he did not want to startle her, as what he had to tell her was almost unbelievable, he related his story.

"When I went away to study the problem before me I did so because I had exhausted every conceivable means of discovering a clue to the murderer of your father. Once I even weakly thought that he might have been mistaken; that it was an accident. But the import of the message, the evidence on the back of the car and the telltale tracks on top of the cliff convinced me that your father was right; that he knew his enemy.

"As a rule, using the material the investigations of the police and reporters afford—and the reporters sometimes prove real sleuths—I invariably find some clue to work upon which, like the one bone the scientist builds a model of an ex-

tinct monster from, enables me to solve the most intricate mystery.

"In the present case neither the police nor the reporters have been able to uncover the slightest clue. Nor have I, who am sometimes unduly credited with the powers of a necromancer. The guilty party evidently shrewdly relied upon the tragedy being accepted as an accident. But he forgot the tire tracks. Criminals always leave a trail, hide it as they will, and, like the boys' game of 'hare and hounds,' it becomes a game which is lost or won by the cleverest deductive reasoners.

"I had taken impressions of the four tire tracks on the top of the cliff where the pursuing auto had stopped, and have had plaster casts made from them. As the machines on which typewritten letters are printed are sometimes found after much patient search and elimination in the solving of criminal mysteries, so I had resolved that, however long or arduous the search might be, I would never relax my efforts, though I had to have every garage in the country visited to find the convicting tires."

Cora, comfortably ensconced in the embrace of a large Turkish chair, facing King, at this declaration of his unwavering devotion in her cause shot a grateful glance at the handsome detective which made his heart beat faster and clinched that devotion.

"Fortune is in your favor, Cora—pardon, Miss Rushmore." But Cora was not displeased at the slip, for she only dropped her gaze, while a faint flush of pleasure suffused her cheeks. King, a bit more eagerly, continued:

"A friend of mine, who is a scientific investigator of psychic phenomena, whom I sometimes consult when everything seems hopeless and at an end, has a wonderfully gifted child, a little girl of seven, named Miriam.

"Miriam is able to read her father's mind as easily as she reads her lesson books; blindfolded, she can readily describe a picture or anything that is placed before her; she locates lost articles as handily as though they were before her eyes; she can tell things that have happened or are to happen of which she can possibly know nothing.

"I gave Miriam's father every detail of the case, and when I had finished he asked me if I had the message your father wrote and the pencil. I had obtained them for the purpose of further investigation and was able to let him have them.

"We were at Wesley's home at Alpine, where he has a fine laboratory for chemical, electrical and psychological research work, and he arranged for an experimental test with Miriam the same evening.

"The room which he used exclusively for Miriam was the conservatory; it was filled with the most beautiful and fragrant flowers, save a space in the centre, where he had a platform about ten feet square, covered with a dark-red carpet. The only paraphernalia otherwise was a small, unpainted pine table two feet square and four unpainted chairs of pine also; there were on the platform. When he began the experiment he drew heavy red curtains over the glass sides of the conservatory, to exclude the night light and the light of a faint moon which occasionally peeped from behind the clouds.

"Directly over the table was a red opaque globe, about twelve inches in diameter; within this was a small candle-power electric light in a red bulb, also opaque. When Miriam, her mother and I were seated at the table on the platform the professor turned off all the lights in the conservatory and switched on the light in the red globe over the table.

"The effect was beautiful. A faint rosy light suffused the conservatory, sufficient to see by; we could plainly discern one another and the surface of the pine table. At one side of the platform was a brazier, in which was burning an incense that gave forth a very delicate aromatic odor.

"From somewhere, not within the conservatory, came the faint tones of an organ playing Gounod's 'Ave Maria.' The effect of the whole, when we were all finally seated, can only be described as 'heavenly,' so peaceful, so quiet the place.

"So soothing the delicate suggestion of music, color and perfume, that one's sense of feeling and hearing were lulled, and when Wesley placed the message and the pencil on the table around which we were seated, Miriam and her mother facing one another and her father seated opposite me, he said we had a perfect circle, properly arranged, and ought to get some positive results.

"We sat in perfect silence for about twenty minutes, I should judge, when lights like diamond points or radium sparks began to appear in the rosy light over our heads. They came more and more, and took the form of clusters, gradually moving in Miriam's direction, until they formed one bright, sparkling cluster over the child, and then they disappeared.

"The sensation then that I experienced was as if I was floating in space; the incense seemed to grow fainter; the organ ceased playing Gounod's beautiful music, and the player's fingers seemed to idly stray over the keys, bringing forth the most entrancing and heavenly chords imaginable, like the music that we sometimes hear from afar in our happiest dreams.

"Over the table where the message and pencil lay appeared a nebulous, hazy vapor; gradually it began to get denser and take on a semblance of shape. Without the least thought of the unreality of what was appearing before my very eyes, without questioning or attempt at reasoning, I calmly watched the unseen force at work—an intelligent force or agent it must have been, for it was manipulating that vapor or fluid-like material as a sculptor handles clay, seemingly, until, after per-

haps ten minutes of time, it had assumed the shape of a man's hand.

"Then, when the intelligence had shaped the hand to the size and form it wanted, suddenly a transformation took place; the hand became a living hand—a man's hand, strong and flexible, with veins and muscles plainly showing and, most remarkable of all, the hand bore on the little finger a large seal ring, with a bloodstone setting."

"My God!" Cora cried in a smothered voice, "it was my father! That was his ring! Go on! Go on! What then?"

"The hand picked up the pencil and slowly and deliberately finished the message. Starting where the pencil had stopped the night of the tragedy on the unfinished capital letter beginning the name, the hand wrote: 'Adam Peterson—Ramapo.' Then the hand gradually melted away as it had come, but faster, and the last shred of the vapor went out in a puff.

"We all sat for about the space of five minutes in absolute silence. Then Wesley spoke. 'I am glad you saw that, King,' he said to me. 'Wait quietly until I turn on the lights; that's all we'll get to-night.'

"Such was the exquisite sensation of etherealness the seance had bestowed upon me that I was loath to leave the table and drift back to the material world. Here was one of the greatest of mysteries, and yet, somehow, it seemed the most natural thing in the world. I seemed to have been in a spiritual atmosphere—the realm of the soul.

"Wesley quietly switched on the electric lights of the conservatory, turned off the red light above the table, pulled back the red curtains at the sides of the room, so that the moonlight flooded the place, adding to its charm, and then quietly picked up the message and handed it to me without comment.

"I was quite prepared to find that it had all been an illusion of the senses, but there was the name and all as I had seen the hand write it: 'Adam Petersen—Ramapo.' In the same handwriting, exactly, as the rest of the message. Are you strong enough to look at it now, Cora?" asked King.

"Yes," Cora replied. "It is the most wonderful thing I've ever heard of."

King took the message from his wallet and handed it to Cora. The dear girl's hand trembled slightly as she took it from him, and she closed her eyes for a moment; then, recovering herself, but with suppressed emotion, a slight heaving of the bosom, she looked at the paper in her hand, saw the well-known handwriting of her father, and, putting the message to her lips, kissed it again and again passionately; overcome, she burst into tears and sobbed in a low, tense voice: "Dad! Dad!"

King went to the sorrow-stricken girl, and kneeling beside her, his eyes, too, filled with grateful tears, put his arms around her, and Cora dropped her head on his shoulder and wept unrestrainedly, while King, silent, gently smoothed her hair.

"Poor little woman," King said in a choked voice, "you have been under a terrible strain. It will do you good to have a good cry; let your tears flow. Everything will come right now, and you can rest easier. Justice will be done, I'll see to that, dear."

For reply Cora sat up, dabbed her eyes with her handkerchief a few times, looked at King with a charming smile, a bit questioningly perhaps, but what she saw in his face, the suspicious moisture in his eyes in sympathy for her, helped; then she quickly put her arms around his neck, drew him to her and kissed him full upon the lips.

For some moments they sat in blissful silence, her head again upon his shoulder, while King smoothed her pretty blonde hair, then Cora smiled and said:

"This won't do, Ned, dear; I must not be selfish and monopolize your time just now, for I know what a terribly busy man you are. What are you going to do now, loved one?"

"Thank you for your confidence and your love, dear," King answered. "With this miraculous clue to work on I will soon clear this mystery and then we will be married and sail away on our wedding trip and I will try and make you forget your trouble."

They parted happy. King with a greater incentive than ever, Cora with a song in her heart and the knowledge of a happy future before her.

Almost as rugged and picturesque as the "Rockies," the Ramapo Mountains, isolated and lonely, though within a short distance of the teeming city of Gotham, are seldom visited by city folks, and their natural beauties and attractions are little known.

Some small scattering settlements are to be found within their confines, the most interesting for the student of history and the artist those that date back to Revolutionary times and which were settled by remnants of the Hessian soldiers, intermingling with Indians and West Indian negroes known as "Jackson Whites."

At Ramapo, in the mountains, and one of the beauty spots of the delightful region and a place of importance, we find Ned King shortly after his last happy interview with Cora. Here we find him camped at the leading hotel, passing as a real estate prospector, but, as we know, in pursuit of information that would lead him to his elusive quarry—Adam Petersen.

King's first call was on the postmaster as the most likely source of information. He found the present incumbent very willing to aid him in every way, but unable to tell him much of the mountain or the people, as he had been in office but a few years.

He was able, however, to send him to the former postmaster, Ezra Munroe, who had retired from active service to enjoy his remaining years —he was sixty-five, King was told—on his farm,

"Crows' Nest," a plateau on one of the highest summits of the mountains.

Armed with a letter to Ezra from the genial postmaster, and with others to mountain people who might be helpful to King, the detective left his high-powered car at the hotel garage and, on the advice of his friend, secured a good saddle horse used to the mountains, the better to negotiate the hilly roads and mountain trails.

So we find King, one sunny October morning, on his way into the heart of the mountains. A perfect blue sky overhead, across which raced billowy white-fleeced summer clouds in frolicsome glee, forming, as King fancifully imagined, fairy islands, turreted castles, huge dragons and other fantastic monsters of the sky, grotesque faces and proud Spanish galleons laden with treasures of Peru, as if some god were idly amusing himself with the plastic ether and then, tumbling all together, starting anew.

King had wisely provided an ample bag of feed for his horse; water, the coolest and purest, from tumbling mountain fall and dancing brook, provided a drink fit for the gods. For himself he had provender enough to keep him a week in saddle bag and haversack California blanket, that made him independent of hotel or other accommodations.

King had started for "Crows' Nest" at daybreak, and was now well up in the mountains. Easy traveling, frequent rests for himself and horse, and the temptation to enjoy the many magnificent views presented as he mounted upward—he had brought his fine field-glasses for the purpose—had consumed the forenoon, and, as the sun was in the zenith, King led his horses into a small clearing through which a purling mountain stream gambled, across which the trunk of a tree made a rustic bridge for foot passage.

First attending to his faithful companion, he removed saddle and bridle; putting on the more comfortable halter, he staked him in the shade where the grass was long and lush and where he could drink to his heart's content.

For himself, seated on the end of the log that spanned the stream, he set out a lunch from his haversack that might have tempted an epicure; for, like a wise adventurer and experienced prospector, he well knew the value of a proper commissariat. "Smokes" he had provided for wayfaring acquaintances; for himself his old brier and "Blue Boar" was preferred.

Besides the letter to Ezra and the others to hospitable mountain "Crusoes," who welcomed a stranger from the "outside" with open arms, King carried in his saddle bags a few recommendations in "glass envelopes," that assured an "open sesame" everywhere. Years in the wilds, the jungles and the West had taught him, as a mining prospector and engineer, the potency of the right "recommendation" in advancing social intercourse.

King was about to "fall to," when he perceived a figure entering the clearing from the road—a picturesque figure: that of a typical mountaineer, tall, thin and wiry, with a face reminding one of our beloved Lincoln; a pointed gray beard, long drooping mustache and long, wavy, gray locks under a battered old felt hat, the brim turned down to shade his face.

An old brown canvas hunting coat, gray flannel shirt open at the neck, brown overalls tucked into hobnailed boots, a belt full of cartridges around his waist, a polished fowling-piece resting in the hollow of his left arm, and over his shoulder a large, well-filled game bag that gave evidence of his skill as a hunter.

He was complacently smoking a well-seasoned corncob pipe. As he drew near King noted the shrewd, piercing blue eyes, yet limpid and honest as a child's, with a merry twinkle withal that denoted the philosopher and humorist.

"Howdy, stranger," he cordially greeted as he saw King. "Our mountain air makes a keen appetite. But don't let me spoil it; keep right on."

King laughed happily at the mountaineer's sally and replied: "'Deed it does, neighbor, and I see from your well-filled bag that it amply provides for that same appetite. Won't you join me in a 'bite'?" King hastened to move to give him a place on the log, of which the mountaineer availed himself, first carefully resting his fowling-piece against the log.

King, delighted to have company, eagerly played host, and quickly placed sandwiches in wax paper, hard-boiled eggs, tomatoes and other good things handy for his guest, then pouring a steaming cup of coffee into a big mug from a pot on the fire near by. With a hearty, "Set to, pardner," he politely waited for the old man to begin, which he did without mincing matters.

"This is like a picnic," the mountaineer laughed, "or a bit from a fairy story. And me hurrying home to see what the good wife had for dinner, and here I am 'held up' by a prince in disguise. I feel like a boy again! Gee! It's great!" Both laughed heartily and were at once on a "chummy" footing.

"Mighty fine gun you've got there," King remarked, for his sportsman's eye had appraised its value at once.

"Yes, siree!" the hunter answered; "that's a Marlin. Glad you like it. Are you after game, too? Plenty hereabouts; the best."

"Not just now," said King. "Just looking over these wonderful mountains. Going to get married soon and might like to come up here in the summer to live. I've got a letter to Mr. Ezra Munroe, former postmaster, and I'm on my way to him now."

"Well, brother, you can give it to me; that happens to be my 'maiden name' before I retired from the service."

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Munroe," exclaimed King, extending his hand. He gave Ezra the let-

ter, which, without looking at or opening, his guest put in his pocket.

"Don't need no letter for you, sir; you bring your own welcome. When I break bread with a man it means 'brotherhood.' Only I ain't got yer 'moniker' yet, bo!" And he laughed.

"Ned King, hailing from New York City; mining engineer, prospector, traveler, writer and—just now—playing detective!"

Ezra's shrewd eyes narrowed at the last word; they no longer twinkled; the smile vanished, and a slight frown gathered; he sat back a little and asked: "Detective?"

King knew his man; knew that the shortest way to what he was after was the best with a man of Munroe's character. Then he unfolded briefly the story of the murder of Rushmore and Miss Rugby, the startling appearance of the astral hand and the marvelous revelation of Petersen's name and where to find him.

Ezra sat very quiet and thoughtful until King had finished the telling. Then he impulsively put out his hand and warmly said:

"King, I can help you! I knew Petersen and I knew Rushmore. Petersen was a damn crook; Rushmore was a 'white man.' He was my friend, too. But it is too long to go into it all here. Come up to my house. I can bunk you as long as you want to stay, and care for your horse, too. Let's go!"

Seated on the broad porch of Ezra Munroe's substantial farmhouse that evening, after a memorable supper provided by the hospitable wife of the genial mountaineer, King learned from the lips of Ezra the history of Petersen and of the early life of Rushmore.

With pipes aglow and the "glass envelopes" from King's saddle bags conveniently near on a small table with the necessary accompaniments, King listened intently to Ezra's relation of life in the mountains.

"Twenty years ago Ralph Rushmore owned one of the best farms in these mountains. Petersen owned one adjoining. Their fathers and great-grandfathers had lived on the same farms. The Rushmore farm had been given to Ralph's great-grandfather, an officer of the American Army of the Revolution, by an Indian chief in gratitude for saving his life.

"Ralph Rushmore married one of the best and prettiest little women ever raised in these mountains, King, and we raise some good ones. Rosalie Brandon was admired and respected by men and liked by women. They were an ideal couple. Happy and prosperous.

"Adam Petersen was known as a hard man. He was close-fisted, close-mouthed and unsociable. He always kept a pack of ferocious dogs about his place, as a hint that he did not want visitors. He had set his mind on having Rosalie Brandon, not because he loved her, but he coveted her father's broad acres.

"Petersen became more surly and unpopular as time wore on. His farm, which was fully as large as Rushmore's, was neglected. He seemed to have plenty of money, however; some thought it was from selling ginseng, which was plentiful in the mountains twenty years ago, but only a few mountaineers knew its market value then; it was worth down in Chinatown, in New York, from twelve to fourteen dollars a pound. Petersen was away from his farm a great deal, but no one knew where he went—no one cared; they left him alone. Mebbe he was after ginseng—mebbe after some deviltry.

"One day Petersen was arrested for passing counterfeit money; then we knew where his money came from. A complete plant for making the money was found on his place. It was in a room constructed in the hillside with a cleverly hidden door leading from his cellar. A confederate, who must have come and gone at night, for no one ever saw him, was caught making the 'queer.'

"It might never have been discovered, if Petersen hadn't bought a horse from Rushmore. Among the bills received from Petersen, which Rushmore deposited in the bank, one was found to be counterfeit. It was a well-made ten-dollar note, but not new; they had some way of 'aging' them that made the money look as if it had been in circulation.

"Whether the bill got in with the good money by mistake or intention was never known. Petersen swore that he had received it in trade, but could not tell from whom. Other things cropped up; the upshot was that Petersen's place was raided and the plant discovered. The plates, dies and tools were destroyed. Fully fifty thousand dollars in counterfeit money was found and burned.

"Rushmore's evidence convicted both Petersen and his partner. They were sentenced to twenty years at hard labor. Petersen raved like a crazy man in court and swore he would kill Rushmore some day. Petersen sold his farm, through his lawyer, while he was in prison. Later Rushmore sold his, to good advantage, when the baby came and moved to New York. He took a partnership in some business down there, and afterward took it all over and made money.

"Six months ago Petersen was released from prison. His partner was already out, as he had got time off for good behavior. Petersen forfeited his by repeated attempts to escape. He came back here secretly for some reason. I ran into him in the wildest part of the mountains while out hunting. I thought at first it was a bear, and kept out of sight in the brush. But I recognized him at once; he was older, but it was the same hard face. He was rooting in the ground, and I saw him dig up a long tin box, which he wrapped in an old gunny sack and then sneaked away.

"He must have made for the city," Ezra con-

tinued, "located Rushmore, watched his habits and followed him on that Palisade trip. He was too crafty to use a gun in the city, but waited until he got Rushmore in a lonely place, watched his chance and sent him over the cliff.

"He evidently mistook Miss Rugby for Cora and gloated to think that he had a double revenge—two victims instead of one. He must have figured that he was safe from detection, as the tragedy would be attributed to an accident," Ezra finished.

"He is probably in New York now," King said. "It is one of the best places to hide. I will go back and see what I can find there. I'll keep in touch with you in case anything develops here. He may return and you can keep your eyes open for him."

King left the hospitable roof of Munroe, rode back to Ramapo, settled his hotel bill and told the inquisitive clerk that he had had a splendid trip and thought he would come and spend his summers in the mountains and hunt in the fall. He drove back to New York in his car, his mind occupied with the thought of meeting Cora as the miles between them were reeled off.

Cora was expecting him; he had wired from Ramapo. She met him at the door and impulsively kissed him, to his delight. Cora looked queenly in a low-necked house dress of a soft pale-gray material. A cameo brooch fastened the old lace collar that fell over her bosom; old lace cuffs completed an attire that made her look unusually charming to King.

King told Cora all that he had learned from Ezra, and she fell in love with the good couple at once, appreciating their kindness to King. She vowed that he would have to take her up to see them "some day." King readily promised.

"What do you intend to do now, Ned?" queried Cora. "I wish you would give up this pursuit, for I fear it may lead you into danger. It worries me to think of you meeting Petersen; he is desperate; won't you promise to drop it for my sake, dear?"

"I will promise this, Cora," replied King; "I will not run any risks. I don't have to. The police are always in evidence at the finish. I shall resume my work at the office for the present and await developments."

Developments came quicker than King expected. He had hardly reached his office the following morning when the phone rang and Cora's voice greeted him.

"Have you seen the morning's papers, Ned?" she asked. "They nearly caught Petersen on the Bowery last night. He was trying to sell counterfeit money. He escaped, but the police are on his track. But you won't get mixed up in it, Ned, will you. You promised!"

"I promise to keep out of danger for your sake, my dear. I'll take a look at the papers and then run up and see you, if you will be at home."

"I'll be here waiting for you, Ned. Don't delay. Good-by."

King hung up. The morning papers were on his desk as usual; his secretary attended to that. He picked up one and read:

"A young fellow was caught at the Alpha restaurant on the Bowery last night trying to pass a ten-dollar counterfeit bill. He protested his innocence; said the bill was given him by an older man he met at the Omega Hotel. He was offered one hundred dollars, counterfeit, for twenty-five. He had been given a bill to test. It couldn't be detected, he was assured. The other man waited outside the restaurant. But he decamped when the policeman, who had been phoned for, entered. He escaped.

"At headquarters it was said the bill was an old and dangerous counterfeit, the plates for which had been destroyed twenty years ago and the 'queer' supposed to have been all burned. It has made its appearance coincident with the release from a federal prison of Adam Petersen, who has served twenty years for making it."

King went to the Tombs to interview the prisoner. He claimed to be a stranger in the city, on his way to the harvest fields up state. He said that he believed the bill to be a genuine one; that, as he was broke, he might humor the old fellow, get a dinner out of it, and give the old man the change.

At the Omega Hotel King learned that the older man, who had registered as "William Jackson," had left hurriedly the night before and left no address.

King's next visit was to Cora, whom he found under a strain and anxious about himself. He assured her that Petersen would be caught before long and promised to keep her informed of what happened. He then left for his office.

Shortly after noon Cora received a phone call from King, who told her Munroe had phoned that he believed Petersen was hiding in the mountains.

"He knows every foot of the mountains," Ezra told him, "and some parts are wild and almost inaccessible; he will burrow in somewhere like a rabbit. But he can be smoked out."

"I will run up there in my car in the morning, it's only a few hours' run, and follow the trail while it is hot," King explained.

"You must take me with you, Ned, or I shan't let you go; I cannot stay here in suspense while you're in any danger."

"All right, Cora," King agreed; "be ready at eight sharp and I'll call for you. It will be a pleasant ride, anyway, and I will be glad of your company."

The next morning—it was a perfect October day—the lovers were off bright and early. The trip was a delightful one; they wisely talked of

other things than the object of their trip; a more engrossing topic was their future.

King engaged rooms at the hotel he had stopped at previously and promised to take her down to dinner as soon as he had removed the stains of travel. He had hardly finished preening when a call came from the office: "Mr. Munroe calling." King hastened down to find his genial friend Ezra seated in the hotel lobby enjoying a big fat "city cigar" instead of his favorite "corncob."

"A big, high-powered touring car was found up here last night, abandoned halfway up the mountain turnpike," Ezra informed King. "It has a punctured front tire and the engine is out of commission. It is an old car, and has had some pretty rough handling; it is well-battered. I believe this is the car Petersen used when he murdered Rushmore. It is now in a garage near here; would you like to go and see it?"

"I surely would," King answered, "but I've got Miss Rushmore with me, and, if you don't mind, I think I'll take her along; better than sitting in her room alone. I'll go up and ask her."

Cora was eager to go. Inaction was intolerable. Introduced to Ezra, she put her two hands in his and told him she regarded him as an "old friend." The honest mountaineer blushed and beamed like a schoolboy and said:

"You won't mind me calling you Cora, then; I used to dance you on my knee when you were a baby, for your 'paw and maw' were my best friends when they lived here."

"Then, just for that, I'm going to call you 'Ezra,' the same as Ned does." They laughed and Ezra was tickled. "Will Mrs. Munroe be jealous?"

"No, siree," grinned Ezra. "Mother knows I'm to be trusted without a hobble; she lets me run around loose nowadays." So they started off the best of friends.

They found the good-natured proprietor of the garage much impressed with being the custodian of the mysterious automobile, the finding of which had aroused considerable local curiosity.

King looked the car over, and then went to his own and brought from it a suitcase. From this he took out a number of plaster casts, which he tried on the tires, including the one that had been punctured. After trying different adjustments, he said he was convinced that it was the machine that had made the tracks on the cliff.

Further evidence was supplied, in King's estimation, when he examined the front of the car. The hood and the right front mud-guard were crushed and bent, as if from a collision. The lamps were new, further confirming King's theory, evidence that they had replaced the broken ones.

"Probably a stolen car," King explained, "or it may have been hired. Petersen would hardly waste money on a new one when he could steal one. He may have had a confederate to drive it on the night of the tragedy. He may be with him now, in hiding."

Further examination of the mysterious auto revealed the fact that Petersen and his confederate, if he had one, had come prepared to stand a siege in the mountains. A box of cartridges for an automatic were found in the car; under the seat were found some canned goods and a box of crackers, evidently overlooked in the hasty flight after the breakdown on the turnpike.

"We ought to notify the Secret Service and the New York police department," King told Cora and Ezra. "Let us go back to the hotel and I will phone them. They will be here by morning; then we can get into action."

The following morning several Secret Service men and a detective sergeant, representing the New York department, arrived by early train. Ezra was introduced, and then the party went into conference in King's room. Cora remained in her own room.

It was finally decided to form a posse of the sturdy mountaineers, under the leadership of the county sheriff. So that no hint of what was afoot might possibly reach Petersen, it was agreed that they should all meet in the clearing in the mountains where King had first met Ezra.

At daybreak the next morning the Secret Service men and the New York detective proceeded to the designated meeting-place, guided by a young mountaineer.

Cora insisted on accompanying King, and, while he demurred on account of the roughness of the roads, he was secretly pleased. So he and Cora, under Ezra's guidance, motored to "Crows' Nest," over a longer route than King had gone on horseback, but over better roads.

Cora was delighted with the beautiful place and the magnificent views it afforded. Good Mrs. Munroe put her arms about Cora in the most motherly way and kissed her, which brought grateful tears to the lonely girl's eyes.

Seated on the broad porch of the farmhouse, in the genial October sunshine, with a cool mountain breeze blowing, Ezra pointed out to Cora the principal views. The sheriff shortly arrived with some of his men and said the rest were scattered over the mountains on the "round-up." Cora was pleased with the bluff and hearty mountaineer, who stood six feet three, with a silky brown beard that covered his chest.

"Ezra, you and Mr. King are to remain here until I want you," the sheriff boomed in a deep bass. "I don't want the women folks left alone. There's no telling what deviltry Petersen and his side partner—for I believe he has one with him—may be up to; they're desperate, and when their grub gives out will have to forage."

Three days later, toward the close of the afternoon, Ezra pointed out to King and Cora a distant figure coming up the mountain trail, mounted on a wiry mustang.

"That's the sheriff," Ezra informed them.

"Guess he's got news. He will be here in half an hour. Must have 'mother' get a bite ready for him, for he looks hungry."

True to the minute, the weary sheriff rode up to the farmhouse. He said he had not closed an eye for two nights.

"We got Petersen at the Jones farm," the sheriff began. "He was crazy with liquor. He nearly scared the wits out of Sally Jones. He looked like a wild man, he was so dirty and ragged; his eyes blazed, and she ran screaming for Jones and his two husky boys. Petersen had sense enough to run, but he didn't get far. He came to bay in a corner of the wheat field behind the stone fence. My orders were to take him alive if possible. So Jones called upon him to surrender. But Petersen swore they would never get him alive; that before they got him he would account for some of his enemies.

He had a big automatic and fired at Jones, but missed him. The shot was heard by one of the Indians beating the wheat field, and he came silently behind Petersen and called him to throw up his hands. For answer, Petersen wheeled and let fly at the Indian; he saw the Jones party advancing and, with his last shot, blew his brains out. We found him huddled in a heap in the corner of the fence. His gun was empty. He had used the last shot on himself.

"His partner is still at large, but the boys are drawing in on him. He is over somewhere on 'Round Top' and can't get away."

Two days later Petersen's companion was captured; found in an abandoned hunter's cabin at the foot of "Round Top," too weak from lack of food to put up a fight or follow Petersen's example and cheat the law, for want of a cartridge; he made no resistance and seemed glad that it was all over.

It wasn't all over, as he later found. Taken to the jail at Ramapo, the New York detective sergeant gave the "rubes" an exhibition of the "third degree" they never forgot. "It was rough," the copper explained, "but it brought forth the desired information."

The prisoner was taken to the kitchen of the jail, where a table was spread with the most tempting foods. In the oven of the stove a leg of lamb was roasting, sending forth savory odors, the door of the oven purposely left open; a steaming pot of coffee permeating the air with its delicious aroma; on the table, celery in a glass; and, worst sight of all for the victim, three bottles of beer, almost within reach of his hand. But not a drop to drink.

Seated in the midst of plenty, with appetizing odors assailing his nostrils, the prisoner was helpless; his arms were held by two husky guards, who were relieved every hour and who prevented him from sleeping, resting and, most horrible of all, from eating.

He looked and acted more like a ravenous wolf caught in a trap than a human being. The only responses he gave at first were snarls, in oaths and curses; he cursed Petersen, his guards and the Almighty. Nor did he weaken until he had been subjected to this terrible torture seven hours; then he broke down sobbing.

A little food was given him to keep up his strength while his confession was being taken by a stenographer.

"I was out before Petersen a year, but I kept in touch with him because he kept me supplied with money. We had been caught together twenty years ago and served time together.

"Petersen stopped here on his way to New York to get a box of the counterfeit money he had hidden. I met him in a hotel on the Bowery by appointment afterward.

"I was for getting away to the Coast or South America, but Petersen had some grudge he wanted to settle before leaving New York. He also wanted to clean up on the phony money; he had ten thousand dollars of it in the tin box.

"He located Rushmore and watched his chance to get him. We stole an automobile, which we kept over in Jersey City in a crooked garage. We followed Rushmore to his home almost every night, but never could get him right, until the night he went to a roadhouse on the Palisades.

"We waited until he started back, and Petersen took a shot at him in a lonely spot, but missed. Rushmore speeded up and tried to get away. His car was lighter and a bit speedier, for ours was an old boat and out of condition.

"He tried to dodge us at a turn in the road and swung to the left in a level clearing toward the edge of the Palisades, but saw his danger in time to stop a few feet away. Petersen saw his chance and drove the car into him, sending him crashing over the cliff. The impact and recoil saved us, and Petersen got the emergency brake on in time to save us from going over, too; we stopped about twenty feet from the edge.

"There was a woman in the car with Rushmore that Petersen thought was his daughter, and this made his revenge all the sweeter.

"We got back to Jersey City all right and put up the car, then went over to New York. Petersen said no one would suspect us, but think that it was an accident when it was discovered. We went to the hotel and put up.

"Petersen agreed to light out for the Coast as soon as he had got rid of the 'queer.' He tried to sell some to a guy, but instead of giving him a good bill to test he gave him a counterfeit—he was so damn sure it could not be detected. It looked all right at that. The guy was pinched, and we had to beat it. We came up here, as Petersen said it was the best place to hide for a while; that he knew every foot of the mountains, and they would never find us.

"We carried what grub we could pick up on the way in a couple of bags. We left our extra cartridges in the car when it broke down. Petersen knew every hole and corner in the mountains

We hid in a cave the first two days, but the trail got hot and we went to the hut. We had two bottles of whisky, but it gave out, and Petersen said he was going to get some more somewhere. He left me, and I did not see him again.

"That's all! You know the rest. You've got Peteren, and I guess it's life for me. What's the use? Let me eat, boys, get some rest and sleep, and I don't care what becomes of me."

Then he was allowed to sit at the table, but it was too much for him; his stomach revolted, and though without food for three days, he could not touch a thing.

The Palisade mystery was solved by the Astral Hand. Life is a big mystery, but still bigger is the soul. The old question, "What is mind, matter, soul?" is no nearer being answered to-day than it was in the remote time when it was first propounded.

The Astral Hand was also instrumental in solving the problem that Cupid presented to King, and which he wisely left to Fate to answer. The answer had been a happy one for both Cora and Ned, and culminated in a quiet wedding at her palatial home on Riverside Drive.

The stalwart sheriff was the best man; genial Ezra gave the bride away, for, as he said, he had "danced her on his knee when she was a pretty baby." He claimed a proprietary interest in her now, and the happy lovers gladly accorded him the right. "Mother" Munroe helped Cora select the wedding trousseau, and a handsome silk dress for herself at the same time, the gift of Cora.

The sheriff's posse were the guests of King, and each member danced with the charming bride. They enjoyed the wedding feast, saw the sights of New York, rode the merry-go-rounds at Coney, and returned to their mountain homes with something to hand down in song and story, each man with a substantial "nest egg" as a souvenir.

Ezra, his good wife and the sheriff likewise were remembered, and the last of all was played on the Cunard dock one bright sunny October morning when the *Mauritania* said away with the happy lovers on the topmost deck waving their disengaged hands to their loyal friends on the dock, wishing them "God-speed."

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The Princess Next-Door

By KATHERINE STAGG

ON a hot day of August, 1919, a girl stood on the corner of Columbus Avenue and Fifty-ninth Street, New York, waiting for an uptown car.

She was a slim, pretty creature, brunette in type, but with the clear skin and delicate features that speak of the north racial people rather than the Latin. Queer little whimsical puckers of the lips told of an adventurous nature, and the expectant twinkle of the eyes showed that so far she had met life with a high heart and an amused delight that it held so many pleasant surprises.

She was dressed in a pale gray organdie with hat and shoes that matched in color, an argent background for her lustrous glance and full red lips, altogether a charming vision.

As it happened Sylvia Gray was her real name, and her penchant for that color was characteristic, for she held it a joke that Fate had given her a name with which she could harmonize her clothes in the most ravishingly becoming way.

Her two-room flat was on one of the uptown streets near Columbus Avenue, and, as the day was stifling, she felt that she would prefer to wait a few moments for the surface car instead of climbing the steps of the "L."

Evidently there had been some delay, and the minutes dragged along with no car in sight until quite a little crowd of people had gathered. Several had spoken to their nearest neighbor in the easy way of those who share discomfort. It happened that next to Sylvia stood a tall man of military bearing, a man in the late fifties with close-cropped iron-gray hear and the firm chin of the man of action. Sylvia had noticed him, for he was of a commanding type, and his nervous manner of taking a few steps and peering anxiously up and down the street seemed at variance to his general appearance. Suddenly he turned to her as if he continued some inner thought, and said gravely: "Pardon me, but I think we had better take an 'L' train, or, better still, a taxi; it is too hot to stay here and wait any longer. I can't stand it, and I don't believe it is wise for you?"

His manner was not in the least flirtatious or bold, but as if they were already acquainted. As she looked up at him she saw that his keen dark eyes were haggard, and he looked as if sleep had been a stranger to him for longer than is normal.

"It is rather trying," she replied easily, with some sure instinct, knowing she was on the trail of something unusual; "but I care say the 'L' will do nicely, and I don't think it worth while waiting any longer for the surface cars—not one is in sight yet."

He lifted his hat and smiled charmingly with an Old World sort of deference that appealed to the young girl; she had seen so much of the easy manners of the average Broadway youth.

"Thank you," he went on as she followed him. "My name is Benton, and I am a hotel man."

A reply was spared her as they reached the ticket office at this moment, and her quick, deft movement in handing her nickel in at the window obviated any awkwardness in the question of a stranger paying her fare. He flushed and gave a little shrug of his well-knit shoulders, but let it pass without comment.

The ticket-chopper told them there had been a fire down-town, and that was why all cars were delayed, but a train would be along in a few minutes.

During the interval Sylvia's self-elected escort remarked that he had been in France in war work and had just returned to take up his old position as manager of the hotel. But he broke off here abruptly to point to the buildings of Roosevelt Hospital below them, and exclaimed: "Do you know, with all the abominations that I went through on the other side, I have not seen or felt such grief as I did this morning before daybreak when I saw my best friend shot down in cold blood, and another wounded by the same friend; he is in the hospital now, and I have just come from there."

This was rather thrilling to come so unexpectedly on a calm Sunday morning on Columbus Avenue, but it explained the stranger's manner. He was in that condition when a woman has hysterics and a man is apt to say things to the person nearest simply for the relief of having an escape valve.

A train came at this moment, and Benton asked quite casually, "At what station do you get off?"

Sylvia told him, mentioning a station about half-way up-town, and he replied that his station was the same. This somewhat puzzled the girl, for it seemed rather too much of a coincidence; but she passed into the car quickly, thinking she could casually pretend that she lived on some other street than her own if he should be persistent. But, to her surprise, he did not follow her into the car, but crossed to the further side of the gates and stood leaning on the rail, looking off with that haggard gaze she had noticed at first, a gaze that seemed watching for something miles away.

As she neared her station Sylvia wondered just what she ought to do. but the train drew

in, the man who called himself Benton stood perfectly quiet, utterly oblivious to Sylvia as she passed within a few inches of him. She hesitated a second, as she stepped out on the platform, whether she should speak and remind him that he had said the station was his also. She, however, decided to let well enough alone, and watched the speeding train in the distance, and wondered curiously just what Mr. Benton had gone through. She had either missed having an adventure or missed having one because she was too much of a coward to see the thing through.

But the next morning she was startled to find lurid accounts in all the papers of the murder of John Scott in the Hotel B———.

The place and time tallied with what the stranger had said, but there was no mention of his name, and not a thing was said about a second person being wounded at the time of the murder.

This struck Sylvia as odd, and she wondered if the two things really were related, or if she only had connected them to suit her naturally vivid imagination.

Several days went by. The newspaper accounts dwindled, and it seemed fair to become only another unsolved mystery. One evening Captain Arundel Marvin, erstwhile of the Army, but now a private detective, was presented to Sylvia at a dancing resort of the better class.

She had gone there with some musical friends, who had been duly paged, but they were called away by a sudden business demand, leaving her to the capable care—dancing and otherwise—of the captain.

In the interval of dances they discussed crimes and mysteries, and in due course Sylvia told him of her adventure, of the strangely agitated man she had met that Sunday morning, and what he had said. Marvin listened carefully, and to Sylvia's delight seemed quite impressed by her story.

Over a long cold drink, which was called ginger ale, and was served after a whispered conversation between the captain and the attentive waiter, Sylvia was startled by the question, "Look here, young lady, how would you like to earn a few real dollars by doing some detective work?"

"Me!" cried Sylvia. "Why, I wouldn't know how."

"You have eyes and ears and intelligence, haven't you?"

"Why, ye-es; but I wouldn't have the remotest idea how to go about such a thing. Then"—somewhat haughtily—"why should I attempt it?"

"For one thing, there's five thousand dollars reward for certain information; that's a fairly good reason, isn't it? And I think I understood that you are a music student who possibly could find good use for that sum of money."

Tears sprang to Sylvia's eyes; they were not winked back before Captain Marvin saw them, and he knew at once that she was one of the hundreds gallantly battling with poverty in order to fit herself for her chosen vocation.

"That surely sounds alluring," Sylvia murmured tremblingly.

"Well, are you game for a try at it?"

"But what should I do? I don't see just how I could be any good in such a serious matter as that," she said tentatively.

"Your lack of experience might be the very thing to help in this case. Rarely, but occasionally it works out that way."

"Would—would it be dangerous?"

"That, my dear young woman, is more than I can tell you; one is always in danger, if one stops to think of that. Who knows but what your mysterious Mr. Benton was the murderer, and you were talking to him while he was still red-handed."

"Oh, no!" cried Sylvia. "I don't think for a moment he had done anything wrong; he wasn't that kind of man."

"See? Your intuition is working on the case already. You are subconsciously looking for a culprit to clear a man who has not even been accused. Pretty good start, I should say."

"You bewilder me. Suppose you tell me just what you know about the case, and then tell me what you think I might do. I feel frightened in a way, but, if you really think I could——" Sylvia's swimming eyes were eloquent.

"Are you willing to try? I want to know that before I go into the details. Forgive me, but this is business."

"Yes! That queer something that we call a hunch seems to tell me that perhaps I can make good; but don't be too sure."

"Good girl. Now pull yourself together and listen for all you are worth. Here, waiter, two more. In the first place, I want you to move to the Hotel B——— to-morrow."

"Good gracious! But I couldn't afford it."

"But my firm can. You must understand that an expense account always must be on tap for such matters as these, and you must not have any scruples on that score. Get me right: this a serious business, and the Scott family would pay any amount if the murderer can be found. They want the case handled without undue publicity, as they are of the old fine stock of Virgina and feel disgraced beyond belief to be a nine-days' wonder in the papers. The nine days are over now, and we may be able to work quietly without arousing suspicion."

"Why, I'm from Virginia myself; there are a thousand Scotts down there. But I know just what you mean; my own grandparents are living, and they are just like that."

"Better and better; you know the breed."

"Wouldn't it be strange if he turned out to be kin of some of the folks I know down there?"

"It might at that; I believe all true Southerners trace their cousinships and friendships unto the fourth and fifth generations. Isn't that so?"

"You seem to know them yourself pretty well," smiled Sylvia.

"And willing to know some of them much better." Marvin's smile matched hers. And oddly, for a business contract, as it were, they both blushed.

"To begin with, I want you to move to the hotel to-morrow. I will make your reservation to-night. There will be no trouble to get good rooms, as it is summer-time. You need take only one trunk. Eat most of your meals there for a few days, until we see if there are any loose clues lying around. The import of this is, I want you to circulate among the guests as much as you decently can without arousing suspicion. Find your Mr. Benton, if possible; dance every night for an hour or two; read in the lounge; write your letters down-stairs. In short, as I said before, keep your eyes and ears open, and use your intelligence."

"It sounds easy, but it don't seem to lead anywhere."

"My dear child, that is absolutely all there is to the business of being a detective. But remember this, little old intelligence has got to be on the job every minute of the day and night, and positively nothing is unimportant when you are engaged in the great game of chasing crime. It is a great game, girl. After being in the war many of us feel that everything has gone tame. But our business never gets tame, I'll tell the world." At that significant "our" Sylvia dimpled and blushed again delightfully.

Several days followed without any progress being made. Sylvia proved to be one of the most capricious guests ever entertained by the Hotel ——, for she couldn't seem to be suited in the way of rooms, and changed her suite until she had looked from the windows of all four sides of the hostelry, not to mention a very comprehensive study of the plan of the interior. But she was always so pleasant and most liberal with her tips, so her frequent moves did not attract any more attention than would be accounted to many females of moods. The management of hotels everywhere are so used to the whims of idle women that it is an old story.

On the tenth day she phoned Detective Marvin, and asked him to meet her for lunch at a place she mentioned near by. A thrill in her voice that she could not control told him plainly she had something to communicate at last.

Captain Marvin had warned her not to phone anything that might be overheard, but he was as anxious as Sylvia when they found themselves at a pleasant table in a breezy corner of the restaurant she had selected.

"Well, is there big news?" he smilingly asked her.

"I have at last seen Mr. Benton; but not in the hotel!"

"Hooray and three cheers extra! Shoot the secret. This melon is iced to perfection, and I feel a hovering as of the wings of success."

"You are in a poetical mood, I see. I did not know that went with your profession," answered Sylvia smilingly.

"Everything goes with my profession. Sometimes the nuttiest of ideas will land the clue we are hunting. That is not in the A B C of any correspondence course, but it all comes in sooner or later."

"The rooms I have now are on the west side of the house, and rather far back, but they are pleasant for the summer, as they overlook the backyards all down the block. They are mostly private houses on this street, as you know, and their backyards are fixed up as well as people in the city bother to do generally. Next-door, however, they have done wonders with the comparatively small space, and it is really a very good imitation of an Italian sunken garden on a small scale; all laid out in flower-beds, a fountain in the center, carved stone benches, a table with an awning, and hanging baskets filled with vines. It's a charming place, and it was there I saw Mr. Benton last night, seemingly very much at home, smoking and enjoying the quiet, I suppose."

"Alone?" Marvin was all attention and snapped the question.

"At first I watched for a long time and finally he was joined by a very handsome woman of middle age, with a foreign air and much glittering jewelry."

"Have you found out who lives there?"

"Yes," replied Sylvia, "Gus, the bellboy, has become my devoted slave, and sometime gossip. He says the house has been occupied for the last few months by the Princess Zirnoff, as near as I can make it out from his eccentric pronunciation, probably a Russian."

"Is Gus that fat boy who looks half Chinese?"

"The same; he is an awful-looking creature, and so different from the darkies I have been used to down South. But somehow I always get along with colored servants. I have tried to pump this boy about the murder, but he pretends that he don't know a thing about it. You know how they are; they will seem as open as possible and then all of a sudden they ease up, as it were, and act so stupid that one just knows it isn't real."

"So far so good," said Marvin. "That Benton is a visitor at this place next-door may prove a valuable bit of information. I found out myself that he is the principal owner of the hotel, but has not been seen in the house at all since the night of the murder. He and John Scott, the murdered man, were life-long friends, and it is said that he took it much to heart."

"Oh, so that is the reason I have never seen him?"

"Have you been able to talk with any of the guests who live on the sixth floor, where the murder took place?"

"I was just going to tell you about that. There is an old Mrs. Turnbull who occupies a suite quite near those rooms. By the way, they are closed up now and not in use. They say this old

woman has lived in the hotel for thirty years, but she don't seem to speak to any one. However, I am going to get her to talk if I have to sprain my ankle on her doorstep. She may know something, and I am going to dig it out somehow."

"Sylvia Gray, I think you'll do." This was said in such an admiring way that it filled the girl with renewed confidence.

The next morning, as the old lady Sylvia had mentioned was about entering her suite, Sylvia happened to be passing, at least the girl made it appear that it just happened, and strangely enough, unless one knew the why thereof, she tore an entire length of silk from her skirt on a projecting nail that she had carefuly planted a few minutes previous at the side of a door. Of course, no one could refuse to allow the girl to enter and pin it up before traversing the corridors that were some distance from her own rooms.

Sylvia managed it all so naturally that it did not take more than a few minutes to make the interview take on a most friendly character. She was so young and pretty that the old woman fell a quick victim to her charm.

While Sylvia's deft fingers worked to fix the rent, so well rehearsed in her own room, she innocently inquired if that was not the floor where that awful murder had taken place.

The old woman at once began to smile in a secretive way, as if much amused at something she could tell if she felt so inclined, a manner that some old women have if living much alone. Life becomes either a grim tragedy or a great joke to them.

A couple of skillful questions in the girl's most naive manner and she elicited the information that Mrs. Turnbull had been awake on the night of the murder, and that about two o'clock in the morning she had seen two men bringing in John Scott between them, almost carrying him, she said. "Absolutely dead drunk, my dear; and no one suspected it at any time, for he was not found until they went to take up his mail at nine, as usual."

"Oh," exclaimed Sylvia. "And didn't you tell any one about it at the time?"

"No, indeed!" answered the dame. "Do you suppose I could or would be haled to a police court to give evidence? No, I kept it to myself, and this is the first I have mentioned it. Besides, Mr. Scott was a gentleman, and it might have hurt his reputation if it had been known." Her manner was that of one who had done a most praiseworthy action.

Sylvia got her skirt fixed in a marvelously short time after she heard this and flew to the phone to get Marvin.

In the meantime Captain Marvin had not been idle, but had searched the records of Roosevelt Hospital and had found that a man had been brought there on the August night which tallied with the murder. He was a youth of good appearance, a Russian, who had been slightly wounded in what had been described as an accidental affair, and his address had been given as the house next-door to the hotel.

After a long talk with Sylvia, Marvin went directly to the house occupied by the princess. The interview was short and explosive. But knowing as much as he now did of the affair, he caught the haughty woman off her guard, and she finally broke down and told the entire story. Scott and her son had gotten into a quarrel over a gambling debt; both were hot-headed and shot almost at the same time, she contended. When they found that Scott's wound was fatal they had put him into a taxi, with two of her faithful servants in attendance, had driven him around several blocks to fool the taxi driver, who supposed his fare was an ordinary drunk, then they had carried him up to his rooms, and left him in his bed to be discovered in the morning, feeing the hotel servants liberally to hold their tongues.

Her son, she added dryly, had already sailed for South America, and this fact probably helped to make it an easier matter for Captain Marvin to get the whole truth from her.

Benton, she further explained, was a friend of all the parties, and hoped nothing of the case would have any further publicity.

The Scott family of Virginia shared this opinion when all the facts were put before them, so the murder in the Hotel B——— is but another of the unsolved mysteries of our great city as far as the public is concerned. Captain Marvin and Miss Sylvia Gray at least had the satisfaction of knowing they had found out the truth, and, incidentally, had collected the five thousand dollars reward.

DOG DIES OF BROKEN HEART

A CHOW dog which has maintained a seven-day vigil on the highway at Washington Street and Leighton Road, Wellesley, Mass., watching the faces in every auto as it wrizzed past, is dead. His body was found in a clump of bushes close by. There is little doubt that he died of a broken heart.

The dog's owner, Nelson Curtis, Jr., of Jamaica Plain, who was located through a newspaper advertisement, hurried there to recover his pet, but he was too late. Curtis got separated from the dog while riding through Wellesley. Since then the little fellow had watched and waited, refusing food from kindly hands, his eyes constantly on the road. The other morning the dog was missed and a search revealed his body near by.

A Night In A Tomb

By RICHARD DUNCAN

THE authorities of the town of Hempstead, in one of our Middle States, once engaged me to detect a band of grave robbers, ghouls, resurrectionists, or whatever you may choose to call those who steal the bodies of the dead. For some time the human hyenas had been at work in and about the village of Hempstead, and it was thought that the bodies stolen were taken to a neighboring city and sold to a medical college.

This particular band of body-snatchers were exceedingly shrewd and cunning, and although from time to time tombs were entered, graves dug up, and bodies of the dead taken away, the utmost vigilance on the part of the local authorities had failed to detect the perpetrators of the crime.

What was my own chagrin when, after I had been about Hempstead for nearly two weeks, I had discovered nothing! Even during the period that I had been at work on the case the resurrectionists had not been idle. An isolated and lonely cemetery had been visited by the ghouls, and the body of a wealthy gentleman who had been consigned to the tomb the day before was carried away.

His adopted son, Randolph Krocker, and only heir, a wild young man, was one of the men who had engaged me to ferret out the ghouls.

After the discovery of the fact that his foster-father had been stolen from the tomb, Krocker came to me, seemingly very much agitated.

"Mr. Burns," said he, "this cannot go on. We must stop the work of these infernal ghouls. If you will recover my foster-father's body, uninjured or mutilated in any way, I will pay you the sum of one thousand dollars in cash. Come, what say you? Will you, for the time being, devote yourself exclusively to the recovery of my poor foster-father's remains?"

"Certainly I will," I said.

I visited the tomb of the Krocker family.

It was strongly constructed, and no evidence to show that force had been used in opening the door could be discovered; moreover, the tomb was locked when the discovery that Mr. Krocker, Sr.'s body had been stolen was made. I arrived at the conclusion that the door had been opened by means of a skeleton key. As I had failed to gain any clue whatever to the identity of the grave-robbers while spying about Hempstead, I determined to visit the nearest city, where the medical college was located, thinking I might gain a clue to the mysterious grave-robbers there.

Of course the theft of the remains of Mr Krocker, Sr., created great excitement in the neighborhood, and the news spread throughout the country.

It had some way become known that I was a detective, and that I was engaged in the attempt to ferret out the robbers, and I became the subject of ridicule by the local wits.

I therefore determined that the best thing I could do was to give out that I acknowledged myself baffled and leave. I hoped to throw the grave-robbers off their guard, and thus increase my chances of detecting them.

At the medical college I learned enough to satisfy my mind that the institution purchased bodies without a too careful inquiry about them.

The demonstrator of anatomy, whose duty it was to supply subjects for the dissecting-room, was a fellow with a cast of countenance that was repellant, because of its hard, heartless, and cruel expression.

It was my idea that this man might naturally be suspected of being secretly in league with the grave-robbers. I gained admission to the dissecting-room without much trouble, and saw all the "subjects."

The college authorities had adopted a singular way to prevent identification of bodies brought there. Their heads were dipped in vitriol, and thus they were so completely disfigured that no danger could arise from exposing them even to a detective.

For some days I was about the medical school, and I even went so far as to matriculate, pay a small fee, and avow my intention of becoming a disciple of Esculapius.

I mingled with the embryo doctors, and attended lectures, particularly those of the professor of anatomy, who usually illustrated his lecture with a human cadaver.

Despite all this, not a clue to the grave-robbers could I get. They kept their secret well. How bodies reached the college I could not find out, but I suspected there was some secret about the building that I had not as yet solved.

Several nights I watched about the college building until day dawned, but my vigil was in vain. Then I took to shadowing the demonstrator of anatomy. He was on his guard.

He did nothing to betray himself, if, as I suspected, he was in league with the ghouls.

I was becoming discouraged, when I heard of the death of an old man-servant of Mr. Krocker's, of Hempstead.

I at once hastened back to the village and consulted Mr. Krocker regarding a scheme that had occurred to me, which, if startling, possessed the merit of promising further developments regarding the grave-robbers. It was necessary to take

the undertaker into our confidence, for Mr. Krocker had at once assented to my plan.

It had been given out that on a certain day the deceased servant would be buried in the Krocker family tomb, in accordance with a provision in the will of young Mr. Krocker's foster-father, who had been much attached to the servant who had faithfully served him for many years.

Now, instead of burying the servant, I was to take my place in the coffin ostensibly provided for the deceased, and in that coffin I was to be placed in the family tomb of the Krockers.

The body of the servant was to be in the meantime preserved by the undertaker in his own vault, provided for that purpose in his embalming establishment.

I was, to all intents, to be buried alive, but the coffin was provided with small openings, through which the air reached me.

The lid of the coffin was not secured so tightly but that I could easily throw it off.

I was in this way consigned to the tomb, and every one was deceived.

The tomb in which I was placed was a square room in total darkness.

I was, however, provided with a key, by means of which I could unlock the door of the tomb, should I desire so to do. I must say that the situation was a thrilling one. Alone at midnight in a tomb, surrounded by coffins. I hoped the grave-robbers would come to steal my body.

At about two o'clock in the morning I heard a noise at the door of the tomb, and presently it opened and a lady robed in black, and possessing a pale face, which had once been beautiful, came into the tomb with a lantern in her hand.

She was followed by two men, who carried a human body wrapped up in a blanket.

I was surprised, for I had expected robbers to come to take away bodies of the dead, and the woman in black and her followers came to bring a body to the tomb.

In profound silence they placed the body in the coffin from which the body of Mr. Krocker had been stolen, and then, without having uttered a word, the mysterious trio quitted the tomb. They secured the door behind them, and leaping up, I ran to the coffin in which they had deposited the body and raised the lid.

The next moment I started in surprise, for the body was that of old Mr. Krocker which had been stolen!

I was amazed and dumfounded, for it seemed unreasonable that the thieves who had stolen the body should return it.

As I stood looking down upon the face of the dead man by the light of a bit of tallow candle, which I had in my pocket when placed in the tomb, and which I had ignited, I heard the sound of footsteps. I listened. The sounds drew nearer, coming to the tomb. At once I entered my coffin and replaced the lid.

The door of the tomb was opened again, a skeleton-key was used, and a bright light appeared. Then four rough-looking men came in.

"That's the box," said one of them, indicating the coffin in which I lay.

"All right; let's take this stiff along, box and all. He's only a poor old guy, about whom there won't be much fuss raised," replied another.

"All O. K., boys. Grab the box and hustle her along!"

They lifted my coffin, carried me from the tomb, and placed me, coffin and all, in a covered wagon in waiting just outside of the cemetery gate. The grave-robbers leaped into the vehicle, and it was driven rapidly away in the direction of the city.

I listened to the conversation of the men.

"What beats me is, who could have stolen that Krocker body they made so much fuss about? None of the gang did that job, and there ain't any outsiders about that I know of in our line," said one.

"Right you are, Nick Kohl; it's a blasted puzzle to me, I tell ye," responded one of the party.

Clearly from this it would seem that the professional grave robbers had no hand in the robbery of the Krocker tomb, which had preceded that of this night.

I could not even imagine an explanation for the mysterious stealing and equally mysterious returning of the old man's body.

That some one had an important purpose to serve in removing the body of old Mr. Krocker from the tomb for a time I could not doubt, else why had they taken the trouble and the risk of discovery in accomplishing the work which was necessary?

The wagon continued on rapidly until the city was reached, when it turned into an alley, and was driven into a barn in the rear of the medical college I had been detecting.

The coffin was lifted out, and the four ghouls carried me along a narrow underground passage, until they came out in the dissecting-room of the college, where the demonstrator of anatomy was awaiting them.

They placed the coffin on the floor.

I grasped a revolver in each hand and cocked the weapons.

The cover of the coffin was removed, and the demonstrator of anatomy looked down upon me.

I kept my eyes closed and held my breath.

The demonstrator seemed to be satisfied. He paid the ghouls, and they took their departure by the same route that they had entered.

"Now to call Pont and Plato, and have this new subject's head placed in the vitriol bath," said the demonstrator, starting for the door.

I knew that the time had come to reveal myself, for Pont and Plato I knew to be two powerful negroes employed in the dissecting-room, who would think no more of killing a man in that secret place than of taking a drink.

With a sudden bound I leaped from the coffin, and with both revolvers leveled at the demonstrator's head, I ordered him to halt.

He promptly obeyed.

"I am a detective, sir, and unless you tell me the names of the band of grave-robbers of whom you have been purchasing your subjects of late, I shall arrest you," I said.

The man was frightened and soon weakened. He gave me the names of all the band of grave-robbers who had desecrated the cemeteries of Hempstead and the vicinity, and then went on to tell me where these men resided and how I could best arrest them. In consideration of this I promised to let the demonstrator off, and he escorted me from the college.

Next morning a lady was ushered into my room at the hotel. She was robed in black and closely veiled.

I arose to receive her, when she threw aside the veil that had concealed her features, and I started violently as I beheld the pale face of the woman whom I had seen in the Krocker tomb.

"My name is Gertrude Gains, sir," said the lady, "and I have come to denounce Randolph Krocker as his foster-father's assassin.

"I was engaged to Mr. Krocker, Sr., and would have become his wife, for, as you can see, I am well advanced in years, and there was no great disparity in our ages.

"Randolph opposed our union, and when his father told him that his mind was made up to marry he swore he would prevent it.

"Mr. Krocker, Sr., died suddenly before our wedding-day, and I suspected foul play.

"I had the body of my affianced removed from the tomb, and an analysis of the contents of the stomach revealed a deadly poison.

"Randolph feared he would not inherit all Mr. Krocker's fortune if I became his wife.

"I request you to arrest him."

This was the substance of the lady's communication, and as she produced a warrant for the accused I arrested him that day.

He was brought to trial, and although the evidence was sufficient to convict him, according to my judgment, the jury found him not guilty, as no real proof could be produced.

THEY DIG FISH IN FLORIDA

IZAAK WALTON scarcely would believe his eyes if he were to walk through the country near New Smyrna, Fla., and encounter negroes digging live fish from the ground as if they were potatoes, and even persons accustomed to the miracles of this age would look twice and then set out in search of an oculist. A certain variety of mud fish found in nearly all parts of the State is responsible for this.

This queer member of the finny tribe inhabits streams or pools which have mud banks or bottoms, is black and weighs up to five or six pounds. When the water in a pool evaporates, as it does in certain seasons of the year, leaving only a mass of mud which on the surface is practically dry, it doesn't worry the fish. They merely burrow into the mud to wait for the rain and apparently continue to live as long as the earth is wet. The negroes locate them by exploring the mud with their bare feet.

The fish is edible, but is not a favorite because of its stringy and course flesh.

LILLIPUT NATIONS OF EUROPE

WHAT is the smallest country in the world? Monaco, with its eight square miles of territory, perched 360 feet above the Mediterranean in the heart of the Riviera, is the smallest principality. It is the best known and most visited, for it contains the world-noted Monte Carlo.

The little country has a checkered and interesting history. Its beginning dates to the days of Hercules, almost 2,000 years before the birth of Christ.

Monaco has a close second in smallness, and a rival in the claim of age, in the independent republic of San Marino, which is the smallest republic in the world. Surrounded by Italy, which respects its independence, this republic rears its thirty-eight square miles of territory to a point 2,500 feet above sea level. Its founder, San Marino, came from Arbe in the Fourth Century to aid the oppressed Christians and build the stone walls of the city of Rimini. Born of his desire for peace, solitude and simplicity of living, these qualities have been reflected in its history. The venerable saint taught his people that war should be resorted to only for self-defense.

A lilliput republic under the joint suzerainty of France and the Spanish Bishop of Urgel is Andorra. Its 191 square miles of valley almost 10,000 feet above the level of the sea are tucked away in the heart of the Pyrenees Mountains. It is governed by a council of 24 members elected by the heads of families in its six parishes.

It is said that this little portion of Spain which is set down in the midst of French territory winks an eye at smuggling. In fact, it is claimed that during the recent war its chief occupation was getting things across the border into France without duty. The inhabitants discussed the practice as freely as they would the weather. But when it is advisable for an Andorran to keep his own counsel he can do it, for a proverb in the Pyrenees is, "Tell a thing to an Andorran and it is lost."—National Geographic Society Bulletin.

Current News

SQUIRREL IN RATTLER'S STOMACH.

A. E. Sipe, a teacher in the high school at Brunham, Pa., in a two-day's hike on the mountains with his pupils, killed a rattlesnake with ten rattles. When cut open a full grown red squirrel was found in the snake's stomach.

CANCER OF THE TOENAIL.

One of the rarest diseases known is cancer of the nail, only four cases being on record. The most recent one is described by Dr. Carlos Chagas of the Medical College of Bello Horizonte, Brazil. It is that of a laborer, aged sixty, who had it on the nail of his great right toe. The toe was amputated and the man, apparently cured, disappeared. The toe was examined microscopically and confirmed the diagnosis.

HONEY IN LOCUST TREE.

A Windsor, Kan., man found a swarm of bees in a locust tree in his yard. He sawed off a limb and fastened a hive there, but the bees declined it, and continued filling the hollow tree with honey. Wishing to secure the crop, the owner cut down the tree eighteen inches from the ground. The stump was full of honey. Then he sawed the tree three feet higher and got a barrel of honey. He sawed again four feet higher, and the honey extended almost to the end.

BOY STUCK IN HYDRANT.

Daniel McCloskey, 9 years old, of 431 West 125th street, New York, stuck his hand in a fire hydrant in front of his home the other night and a policeman and a whole fire engine company were required to get it out.

The hand went into the hole in the hydrant easily enough, but it wouldn't budge when the lad tried to pull it out. It was held by the suction. Patrolman George Beck vainly tried to release it and then called Engine Company 40. The firemen had to take the hydrant apart.

ROOF OF WASHINGTON'S HOME.

The wood shingle roof on George Washington's home at Mount Vernon was repaired by him in 1785 and was not again repaired until 1860—a life of 75 years, says the American Forestry Magazine of Washington. There has been many instances found where shingle roofs have lasted satisfactorily for 50 years and even 100 years. It is not at all unreasonable to attribute such a lifetime to cedar when we consider that the old sarcophagi in which some of the Egyptian kings were buried 3,000 years ago are still found in fairly sound condition.

TO IRRIGATE SAHARA.

An immense African irrigation project to enable the French colony to raise France's cotton instead of leaving the country dependent upon the United States is contained in the bill recently presented in the Chamber of Deputies. It will require the expenditure of about 250,000,000 francs for damming the Upper Niger in the French Sudan and irrigating three and three-quarter million acres. With the Niger utilized between Bammako and Timbuctoo it is calculated the yield will exceed that in America.

CANALS FOR GARDEN OF EDEN.

The Garden of Eden is to be irrigated and made fit for human habitation. At least so say the French and British Governments. The Garden was a prize of the late war which they won, conjointly; and which, conjointly, they must now retrieve from the evil days into which it fell under the rule of the Truk. Eden, as understood in this proposal, consists of millions of fertile acres fifty miles west of Bagdad along the Euphrates River. When Herodotus, who was born in 384 B. C., visited Mesopotamia, he said he found it "a forest of verdure from end to end."

FIREFLY WASTES NONE OF ITS LIFE

Approximately 95 per cent. of the energy used to light the ordinary electric lamp is wasted in the form of heat. The remaining 5 per cent. is expended in the form of light. The electric lamp, therefore, is a better furnace than a miniature sun, says Experimental Science (Washington).

If we compare the spectrum of an ordinary 4-watt electric lamp with that of a firefly, we observe that the light of the firefly is almost all of one color, yellow, while that of the electric lamp is spread out over the whole spectrum.

Dr. W. W. Coblentz, the invisible light wizard of the Bureau of Standards, has succeeded in measuring the light and the heat from the firefly, commonly known as the "lightning bug." Using several hairbreadth thermocouples of silver and bismuth wire soldered together and inclosed in a vacuum, Dr. Coblentz found that the temperature of the luminous organ of the firefly is about 0.2 of a degree above the darker portions. A test tube fitted with a thermometer and filled with fireflies acquired a temperature of about one degree more than the tube and thermometer when empty.

The old question has probably risen in the minds of many readers, "Why does a firefly flash?" The commonly accepted theory is that the insects flash to attract the opposite of the sex. Both the male and female flash.

WILL OPERATE ON SKULL TO END CRIMINALITY.

Yale Medical School experts will try to turn Theodore Scanlon of Brooklyn from a criminal into a young man of normal mind by removing a piece of his skull which is pressing upon his brain.

Since he was injured by falling off a tree when a boy he has every Spring acted abnormally and criminally.

His latest escapade occurred in June, when he was accused of having stolen money order blanks and stamps at Jamaica, L. I.

His brother, John F. Scanlon, came to New Haven from Brooklyn and in conference with the Federal authorities expressed his belief that the proposed operation would cure him of his occasional lapses. He has been committed to juvenile reformatories because of them.

The youth's parents are respected residents of Arlington, Mass.

STEAM PRESSURE COOKERS IN EQUADOR.

A correspondent writes us that the Jivaru Indians have a steam "pressure cooker" all their own. An earthenware jug or pot, small at the bottom, bellying out at the middle to about 15 inches, and then into a narrow neck, ends in a lipped mouth. A grid or false bottom of split bamboo is built about three inches from the bottom of the pot, the space between is filled with water; the food—meats or vegetables or both—is placed on this grid and the top of the pot is covered with several large palm leaves, crisscrossed and tied down with vines. The pot is then placed upon the fire and the food is thoroughly cooked in a very short time. This "latest" method has probably been used by the Jivaru Indians for centuries, and our correspondent says that he has enjoyed many a monkey and parrot cooked by this method.

RAINMAKER GETS OFFER OF $3,000 AN INCH.

C. M. Hatfield, rainmaker of California, has been offered "$3,000 an inch" by the farmers of Wisconsin for all the moisture he can produce from the heavens. Hatfield was offered $2,000 an inch by the farmers of the Medicine Hat district in the Alberta country and after brewing a mysterious chemical in a vat twenty feet high brought a rainfall of 4.24 inches. He got $8,000.

That isn't all Hatfield has done in the way of opening up the heavens. He was paid $3,000 an inch for several inches of rainfall produced for the farmers of Washington State. The mixture which he uses has the peculiar power of coaxing rain from the weather gods, is the way Hatfield explains his secret.

The offer of $3,000 an inch from the Wisconsin farmers was made by Edward C. Pomerening, president of the Wisconsin Society of Equity, which represents 3,500 Wisconsin land owners.

FIRE-WALKING IN OLDEN DAYS.

Walking barefoot on burning embers is a religious ceremony still performed in certain parts of the world. Lieut. Col. T. R. St. Johnston found it in the Pacific, and describes it in a recent book on the islanders. The Lancet (London) in reviewing this book cites the words of Virgil in the Eleventh Book of the Aeneid, who gives an account of a fire walking ceremony held at Sorracte in honor of Apollo.

"Highest of gods, Appo, guardian of bold Sorracte, thou whose chief worshipers we are, thou for whom the pile of burning pine wood is fed, while we upborne by faith press our footsteps in the glowing embers."

Pliny says that the power to walk through the blazing wood embers was confined to one family, the Hirpi, and Servius, the commentator, quotes Varro as saying that they rubbed their feet with a drug. So we find an identical ceremony in primitive Italy and in Polynesia.

THE APEX OF EUROPE.

Mont Blanc undoubtedly remains "the apex of Europe" in spite of the loss of part of its top in a gigantic snow and land slide as reported in press dispatches. This great mountain led its nearest European competitor for altitude, Monte Rosa, by 564 feet. Though actual measurements of the loss of height by Mont Blanc may not be made for some time, estimates so far are that it has lost "some scores of feet," a loss which still permits it proudly to rear its head far above all other pinnacles of the earth's crust west of the Caucasus.

Mont Blanc, the "White Mountain," is the westernmost of the great peaks that form the Pennine Alps, which include in their length of about 50 miles such well-known features as Monte Rosa, the Matterhorn, the Great St. Bernard Pass and Mont Blanc itself. Mont Blanc lies on the border between Italy and France. About ten miles to the northeast, also on the crest of the Pennines, is the common corner of France, Italy and Switzerland. The towering White Mountain is easily visible in fair weather from Geneva, seat of the League of Nations, 60 miles to the west.

Mont Blanc has been accepted as extending 15,782 feet above sea level—just 58 feet short of three miles. As a matter of fact, its height has varied from time to time. The highest visible stone in the mountain was 171 feet below the top, the crest itself being made up of an unknown thickness of ice and consolidated snow. This cap becomes slightly lower in summer due to melting.

Partly hidden among lesser peaks and foothills, Mont Blanc was practically unknown to Western Europe until 1744. For more than a quarter of a century a standing reward for any one who would discover a route to the top was uncollected. Finally, on Aug. 9, 1786, the crest was reached by a peasant guide, Jacques Balma.—Bulletin National Geographical Society.

MILK FROM PEANUTS.

The common peanut is the source of a new substitute for milk which so closely resembles its prototype that it turns sour and curdles, produces buttermilk when churned and may be made into cheeese, says the Scientific American. The flavor, in which the nut characteristically persists, is declared to be practically its only point of variance with cow's milk. The new lacteal product originated in the laboratory of an American university where the peanut kernels are converted into four times their volume of milk, varying from 4 to 8 per cent. of fat content and from 2.4 to 3.3 per cent. in protein. The cost of production is said to be considerably less than the market price of dairy milk.

CURTAINS PAINTED ON THE WINDOWS.

Science has been coming to the aid of the housekeeper during the last half a century. Inventors have been keeping awake nights figuring out how they could lessen work for the woman in the home. They have reached a stage where cooking, sweeping and scrubbing are largely a matter of turning on the electric switch.

But it is a mere man who has developed the latest wrinkle in household furnishings by providing artificial curtains. These new style window hangings are on a spick and span lunch wagon near the Long Island station in Brooklyn. The curtains are painted on the windows. The brush wielder has produced all the effects of the fanciest lace draperies. No longer do the curtains flap in the customer's face, blow into the soup or get soiled. Ten feet away they look like the real thing and a swish with a clean cloth makes them look like they had just come from the laundry.

SQUANDERED $5,000,000.

Sequah, the most famous itinerant quack of his time, who died in Johannesburg, South Africa, penniless at the age of 72, went through a fortune estimated at $5,000,000, obtained from the credulous.

Sequah was born in London, but posed as a red Indian. He had remarkable gifts as a showman and a powerful personality that enabled him to work his cures. He inspired faith, drew people to him like a magnet and exercised a certain spell of a hypnotic nature over them. Touring the country in magnificent style, he would hire the largest hall in a place, work up enthusiasm with a brass band and then proceed to work his miracles of cure. He was an exceptionally fine elocutionist, a fluent speaker and something of a singer—talents he later put to use on the variety stage after giving up the medicine business. Another natural endowment was great physical strength. He could pull out the most obstinate tooth, even if he took a piece of jawbone with it, and then make the patient swear before the audience that the operation was painless. When he applied his magic oils against rheumatism he gave the patient such a severe rubbing that the original pain was forgotten. Many patients who hobbled on the stage came off without crutches, owing to faith and excitement. But relief was, of course, only temporary.

Sequah, whose real name is said to have been Hartley, reached the zenith of his fame in the early '90s. He was everywhere denounced as an impostor, but that only increased his following among the credulous masses.

DANCE FLOORS ON SPRINGS.

Dance floors can be quite interesting from a constructional point of view. The best ones are not, as is popularly supposed by the non-dancing public, parquet floors. Parquet, though beautiful in appearance, and possessing a certain merit in the fact that its criss-cross construction prevents it from becoming too slippery, must of necessity be laid on a comparatively solid foundation. The best floors are carried on springs.

The problem of the ideal suspension of ballroom floors has occupied the minds of inventors and engineers for many years, and innumerable ingenious devices have been tested with varying success.

Some of the earlier designs consisted of floors suspended by iron chains. By this means a certain amount of "give" was obtained, but the movement allowed was necessarily almost entirely in a lateral instead of a vertical plane.

Another scheme was to support the floor on light joists, which bent to some extent when sufficient weight was imposed upon them. In order to prevent the springing from being confined to the middle of the floor, wedge-shaped pieces were cut out of the ends of the joists, and some elasticity was obtained around the sides.

With such a method as this the chief difficulty would seem to be that of striking a happy mean between very strong joists and complete rigidity and very weak joists and the possibility of the floor "sinking with all hands" in the middle of an unusually animated one-step!

The modern spring floor has reached a stage of very high efficiency.

At the Empress Rooms, in London, for instance, the floor is constructed of narrow oak planks laid on a framework of strong but supple joists. These are supported on spiral steel springs 45 in number, which are anchored to the concrete foundation some 18 inches below the dance floor.

A floor of this type is so delicately sprung that though when a dance is in progress the movement beneath one's feet is never too pronounced, yet a single person when the floor is empty, can make it "give" perceptibly merely by rocking up and down on his heels.

Such floors as these are, of course, delightful to dance on and cause far less fatigue to the dancers than does the solidly laid parquet

TAKE NOTICE!

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. Here are the latest numbers:

NO.

40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "Sanctuary," by William Hamilton Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by Charles F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign of the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps" by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura Reid Montgomery
53 "The Blackjack," by Wm. Hamilton Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by Beulah Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by Ethel Rosemon.
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by William Hamilton Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by Caroline Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
62 "The Velvet Touch," by Julian Darrow.
63 "The Clue of the Red Lamp," by Chas. F. Oursler.
64 "The Scheme of Solomon Snare," by Wm. Hamilton Osborne.
65 "Quicker Than the Eye," by Ralph Cummins.
66 "The Clue in the Dark Room," by Hamilton Craigie.
67 "The Tongue of Osiris," by Marc Edmund Jones.
68 "Detective Wade's Big Case," by Ethel Rosemon.
69 "The Spirit Bell," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
70 "The House Behind the Wall," by Julian Darrow.
71 "The Admiral's Spoons," by Wm. Hamilton Osborne.
72 "The Canine Clue," by Thos. J. Lally.
73 "The Psychic Enemy," by Arthur Wm. Andreen.
74 "The Wonder Girl," by Ralph Cummins.
75 "On the Wrong Trail," by Ethel Rosemon.
76 "The Spirit Witness," by Chas. F. Oursler.
77 "The Little White Room," by Marc Edmund Jones.
78 "The Stolen Year," by Edmund Elliot.
79 "The Affair at Hollywood House," by William Kofoed.
80 "A Keyless Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie.
81 "Professor Satan," by Charles Fulton Oursler.
82 "Who Killed McNally?" by Beulah Poynter.
83 "The Clue of the Whorl," by Katherine Stagg.
84 "The 'Czar' and the Ring," by Edmund Elliot.
85 "A Clue of Flame," by Jack Bechdolt.
86 "The Face in the Crowd," by Marc Edmund Jones.
87 "The Man in Room No. 7," by Chas. F. Oursler
88 "Four Ten-Dollar Bills," by Henry G. Howland.
89 "A Chalelnge to Power," by Dr. Harry Enton.
90 "The House Next-Door," by Police Captain Howard.
91 "The Trance Detective," by Chas. F. Oursler.
92 "Friday at Twelve," by Katherine Stagg.

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The main span of this bridge will be forty feet longer than that of the cantilever bridge over the Firth of Forth, and fifty feet shorter than the main span of the Quebec Bridge. It will thus come third in length of main span when the bridges built or about to be built, are completed. First is the Hudson River Bridge 3,240 feet; second, the Quebec Bridge, 1,800 feet and third, the Philadelphia Bridge, 1,750 feet. About 33,000 tons of metal will be required, as compared to an estimate of 47,000 tons for a cantilever bridge over the same river.

MOROCCAN WIVES WORK HARNESSED WITH OXEN.

Apart from all international agreements and political reasons, the stranger in the Spanish zone of Morocco soon reaches the conclusion that humane feeling and propriety call for an effort to bring the inhabitants of Morocco into contact with civilizing influences.

The sloth and misery existing among the men of Morocco strikes one on every hand. They despise labor of any kind for the purpose of making a living. They think it good, however, for their women folk and see no inconsistency in harnessing their wives with beasts of burden.

Frequently women may be seen carrying their infants in leather sacks slung at sides while they are attached to the same yoke as a decrepit bullock or a consumptive cow dragging a clumsy cart. Behind them their lords and masters hold lengthy discussions, never giving aid even in the most difficult circumstances.

At night the men sally forth to rob in the neighboring settlements, for they seem incapable of shaking off their inbred love of theft. Many of them, it is said, would murder a close relative for a silver coin.

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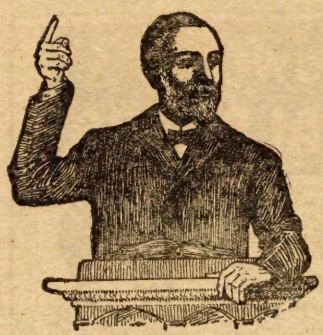

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NOTE: "The Inner Mysteries of Rheumatism" referred to above by Pastor Reed lays bare facts about rheumatism and its associated disorders overlooked by doctors and scientists for centuries past. It is a work that should be in the hands of every man or woman who has the slightest symptoms of rheumatism, neuritis, lumbago or gout. Any one who sends name and address to H. P. Clearwater, 534 F Street, Hallowell, Maine, will receive it by mail, postage paid absolutely free. Send now, lest you forget the address! If not a sufferer, cut out the explanation and hand it to some afflicted friend.

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After hair growth

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ABOUT WOOD PULP.

There are two kinds of pulp used in the making of paper. One is ground wood pulp and the other is sulphurous acid pulp.

In making the ground wood pulp the wood blocks are forced against the face of a large revolving grindstone with a pressure of 125 pounds the square inch. The wood fibres are broken up and separated, and the resulting product is known as ground wood pulp. The blocks are fed into the stone grinders from magazines on the floor above. As it leaves the grindstones the pulp is extremely hot, owing to the vast amount of friction generated in the grinding. In order to keep down this heat, as well as to bring the pulp into a liquid state so that it can be easily pumped, water is constantly showered upon the stones.

This hot mass of pulp is next pumped into the screen room, where the portion of the mixture which is fine enough passes through a finely perforated copper cylinder. That portion which is rejected is either reground or used for cardboard or heavy paper. Upon removal of the surplus water the pulp is ready to be mixed with the other ingredients to be turned into the news print.

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